練習試合で投げてると
バックネット裏にウチの(じいちゃんが(驚)
(普段、無口で試合があること言ってないはずなのに
愛車のカブに乗って来てくれたんだ・・・・)
力みすぎたのか何なのか
その日は(も)大炎上・・・・
・・・・・・じいちゃんの姿もいつの間にか消えてたとさ。

寺嶋裕二

Shonen Magazine Comics

26

Yuji Terajima Presents

Ace of Diamond

TOKYO

ダイヤのA エース

寺嶋裕二

KCM4488

KC MAGAZINE

ダイヤのA エース

26

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Ace of Diamond

秋季大会が開幕し、新チームとなった青道野球部は
再び甲子園を目指し戦い始める！
不調に苦しむ沢村・・・・。
一方、降谷はエースになるべく好調の投球を続ける！
開いた差・・・・。弱さを認め、それでも「こいつに負けたくない」！
揺るぎか、復調の兆し

絶賛好評発売中

KC 寺嶋裕二作品

■GIANT STEP 全4巻
■ダイヤのA ①～
以下続刊

COVER ILLUSTRATION★YUJI TERAJIMA
COVER DESIGN★DAIJIRO FUKAUMI(tent-san)

2011.5
KC MAGAZINE

Chapter 220 / Under the September Sky

Chapter 221 / Progress

Chapter 222 / Force of Attraction

Chapter 223 / Sacrificial Pawn

Chapter 224 / Pitfall

Chapter 225 / The Final Lesson

Chapter 226 / Anger

Chapter 227 / Comeback

Chapter 228 / Senpai

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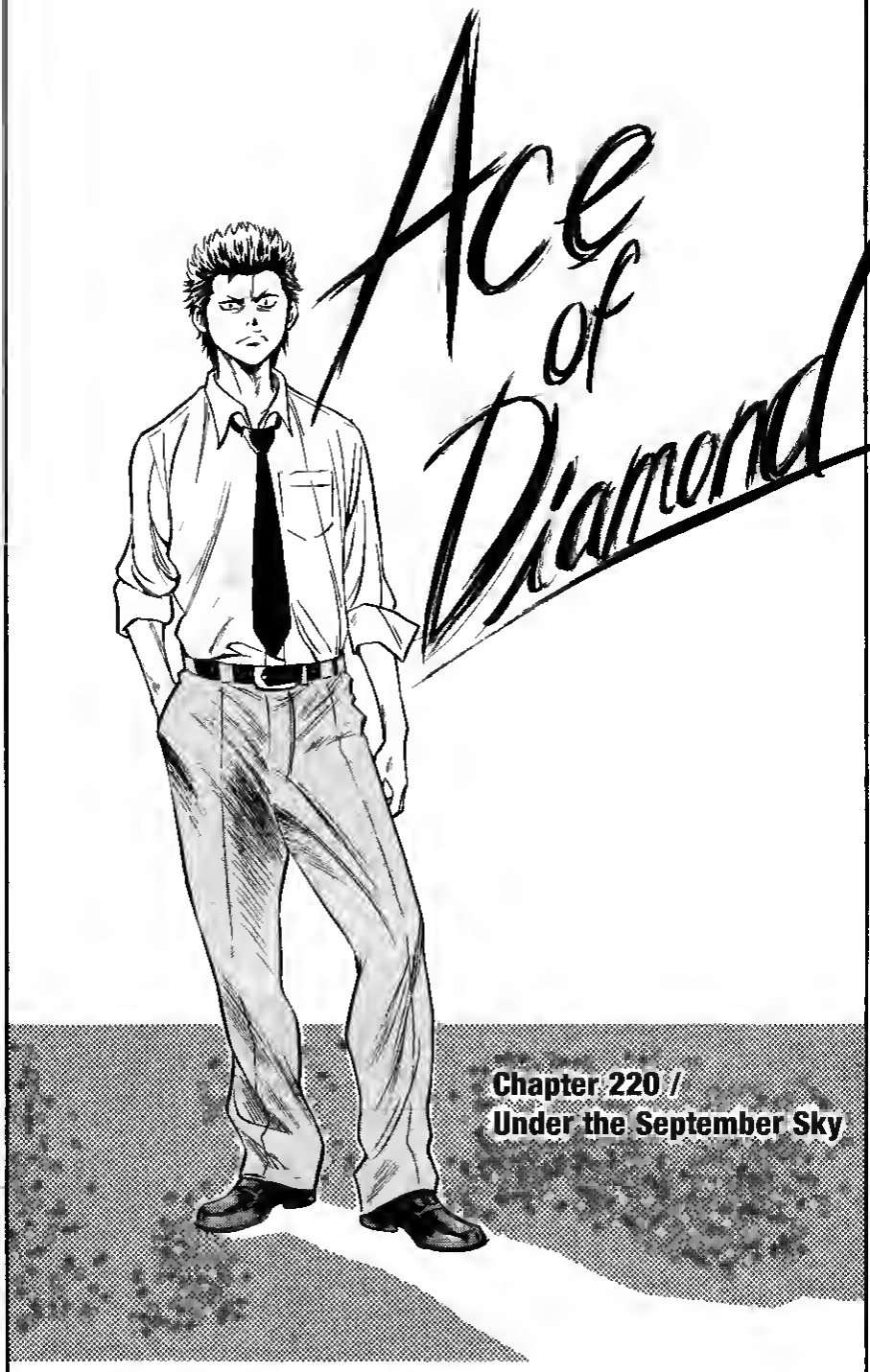

Ace of Diamond
Chapter 220 /
Under the September Sky

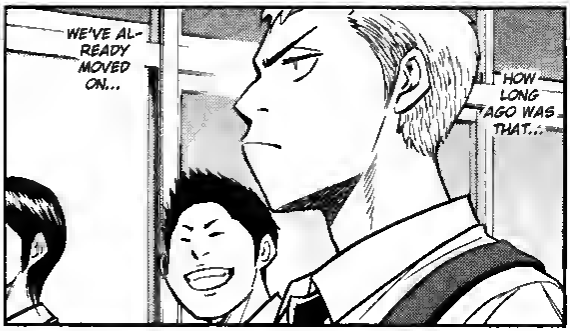
SIGN: SEIDOU HIGH SCHOOL

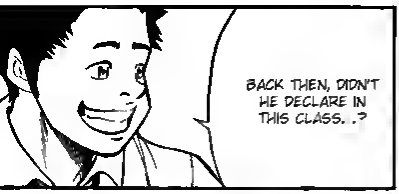
NO WAY!! AROUND JAPAN ON A BICYCLE!?
DID YOU LISTEN TO IT? THE BACK HORN WERE LIVE ON THE RADIO!
DAMN.. I DIDN'T STUDY AT ALL
WE MET YESTERDAY!

P/N | THE BACK HORN ARE A ROCK BAND

THAT WAS A REAL SHAME. KOSHIEN, THAT IS.
EVEN THOSE IN THE STANDS WERE CRYING—
MY BUDDIES WERE EVEN MUCH MORE HYPED THAN THE GAMES AT KOSHIEN...

SPEAKING OF WHICH, HE'S REALLY INCREDIBLE. THAT GUY.
SAWAMURA!


WE'VE ALREADY MOVED ON...
HOW LONG AGO WAS THAT...


BACK THEN, DIDN'T HE DECLARE IN THIS CLASS...?

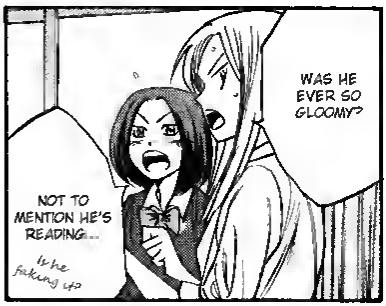
ALTHOUGH I'M NOT ADMONISHED BY ANYONE RIGHT NOW
!
IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF!!
I'M THE MAN ENTRUSTED WITH THE BASEBALL CLUB'S ACE NUMBER!!
REMEMBER THAT WELL!

HE PITCHED SO GRANDLY ON THE FIELD AT JINGUU STADIUM.
he also kept yelling
TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM HOW HE IS IN CLASS.
青道

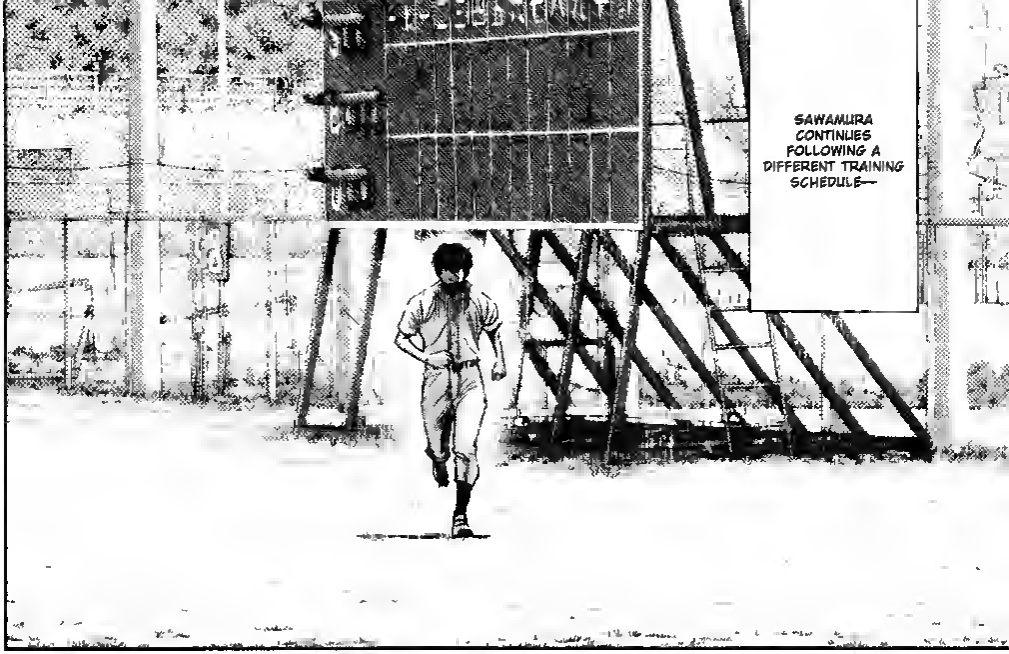
.....
ALTHOUGH THE CLASS LAUGHED AT HIM BACK THEN,
HE MIGHT REALLY BECOME AN ACE
HUH?
DID I SAY SOMETHING WEIRD?
...NO
HEY... HARUNO!
DID ANYTHING HAPPEN TO SAWAMURA THIS SUMMER?
HASN'T THE ATMOSPHERE AROUND HIM CHANGED?

五輪書
VAGABOND!?
Hammer give me the details!
THAT'S THE BOOK OF THE FIVE RINGS, THE TACTICS BOOK ABOUT HIS LIFE AND SWORDSMANSHIP, WRITTEN BY MIYAMOTO MUSASHI JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH.

T/N: MIYAMOTO MUSASHI IS THE MAIN CHARACTER OF "VAGABOND" MANGA



EVEN THOUGH THE DRAW FOR THE QUALIFIER BLOCK IS APPROACHING.
THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SEMESTER.
WHAT DOES HE WANT FROM A MAN WHO HAS NEVER FAILED IN HIS LIFE...?
BUT I DARK SAWAMURA ISN'T THAT BAD.
WHAT? SAWAMURA WANTS TO BECOME A SWORDSMAN?
That's funny!

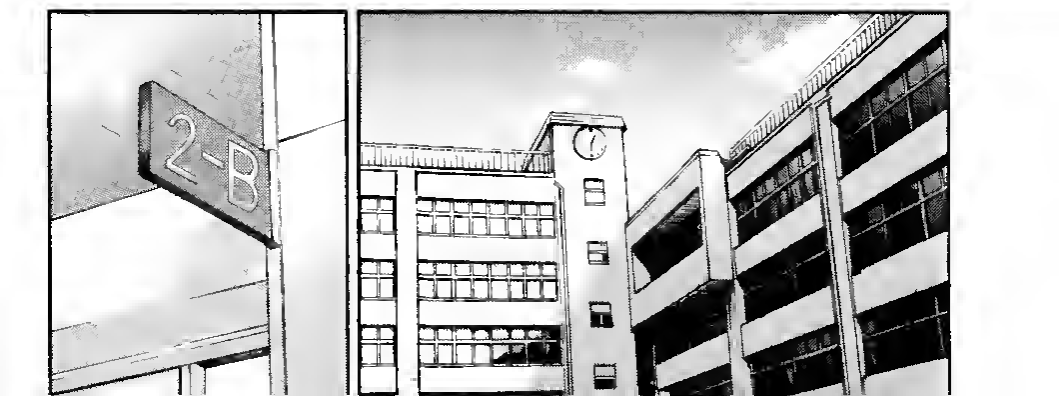

SAWAMURA CONTINUES FOLLOWING A DIFFERENT TRAINING SCHEDULE—

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING AMONG THE STRONGEST?
OH? SAWAMURA, THAT'S UNUSUAL FOR YOU TO BE READING!
BOOK INVINCIBLE
HIC...

I SEE
TO THE INSIDE CORNER
SO HE'S LOST HIS SINGLE GREATEST WEAPON..
HE USED TO BE ABLE TO PITCH CONTINUOUSLY TO THE INSIDE CORNER WITHOUT FEAR OF THE BATTERS,
BUT — DID HE PITCH FOR ANY OTHER PRACTICE GAMES DURING THE SUMMER BREAK?
AH... YES.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN IT'S FINE IF YOU GUYS DON'T DWELL ON IT TOO MUCH.
INDEED...
IF IT'S THE YIPS, THAT WOULD BE A PROBLEM.

I TRUST THAT HE WILL CHANGE AND BECOME MUCH MORE ACTIVE AFTER THIS SLUMP...
SENPAI, WON'T YOU AT LEAST HAVE A WORD WITH HIM...
AH...

HE'S... THAT SORT OF GUY...

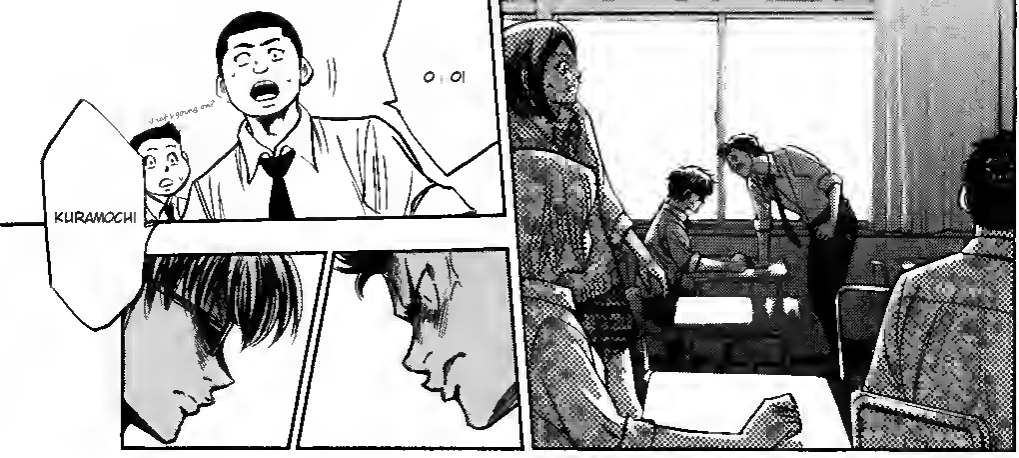

2-B

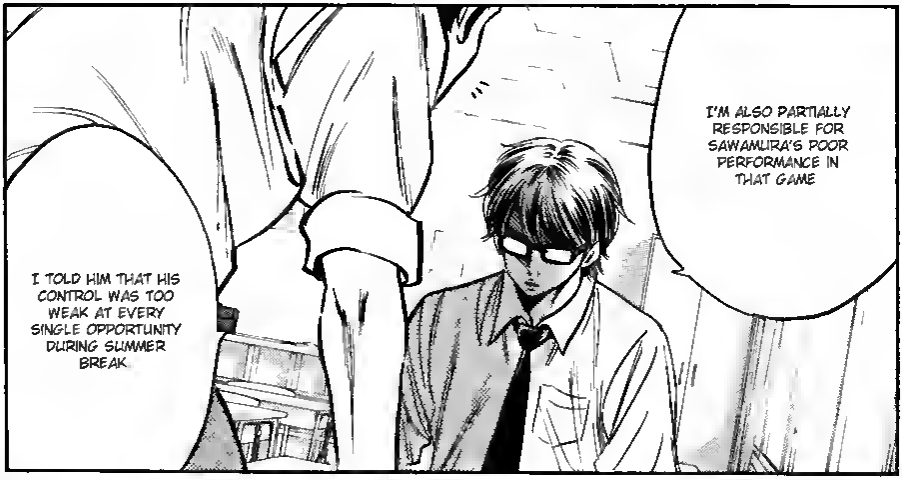
ABOUT WHAT?
SAWAMURA!!
ABOUT SAWAMURA!
YO— CAPTAIN
WHAT WILL YOU DO FROM NOW ON?
ISN'T HIS STRENGTH NECESSARY FOR THE FALL TOURNAMENT?
HE HAD A HARD TIME IN THE GAME WITH YAKUSHI...
TO THE TEAM, HE'S A VALUABLE SOUTHPAW PITCHER
HMPH... AREN'T YOU TOO CONCERNED ABOUT HIM
INSTEAD OF BEING CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR KOHAI,
SHOULDN'T YOU BE MORE WORRIED ABOUT THE WEAKNESS OF OUR BATTING LINEUP?
NO WAY, IDIOT!!
SINCE HE'S ALWAYS MOPING IN OUR ROOM, IT'S GLOOMY.

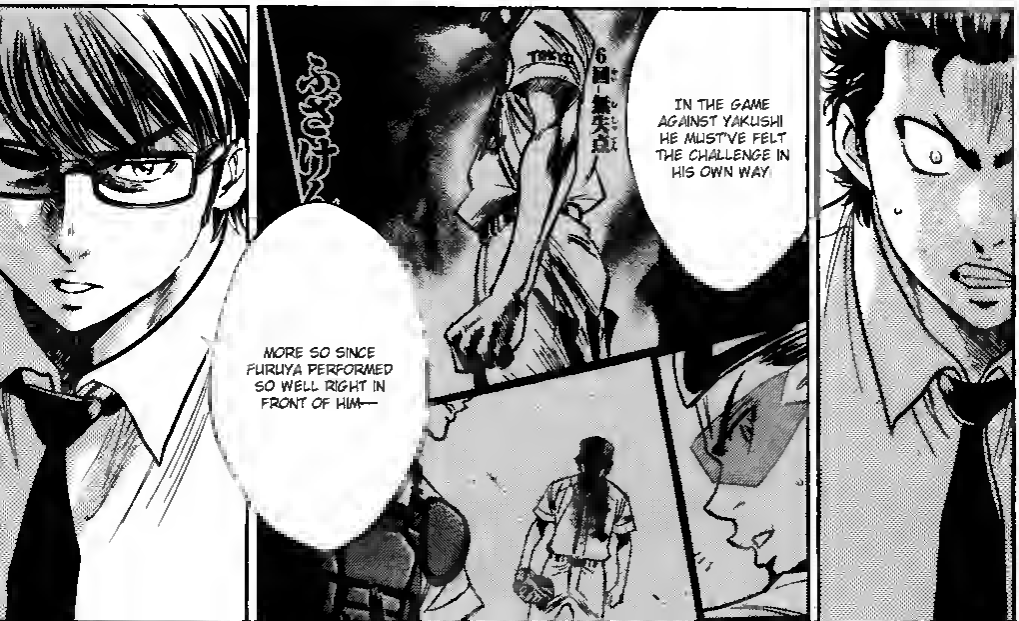
SEE, THAT GUY IS THE MOOD MAKER OF THE TEAM ..
WELL, THAT'S TRUE!

NOW THAT THE TOURNAMENT IS APPROACHING, WE SHOULD PRIORITIZE THE TEAM OVER INDIVIDUALS
DIDN'T THE COACH SAY THAT HE WOULD PRIORITIZE USING THE GOOD PLAYERS?

I KNOW ABOUT THAT!
BUT AS HIS SENPAI, THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN JUST LEAVE IT BE!


O-OI
KURAMOCHI

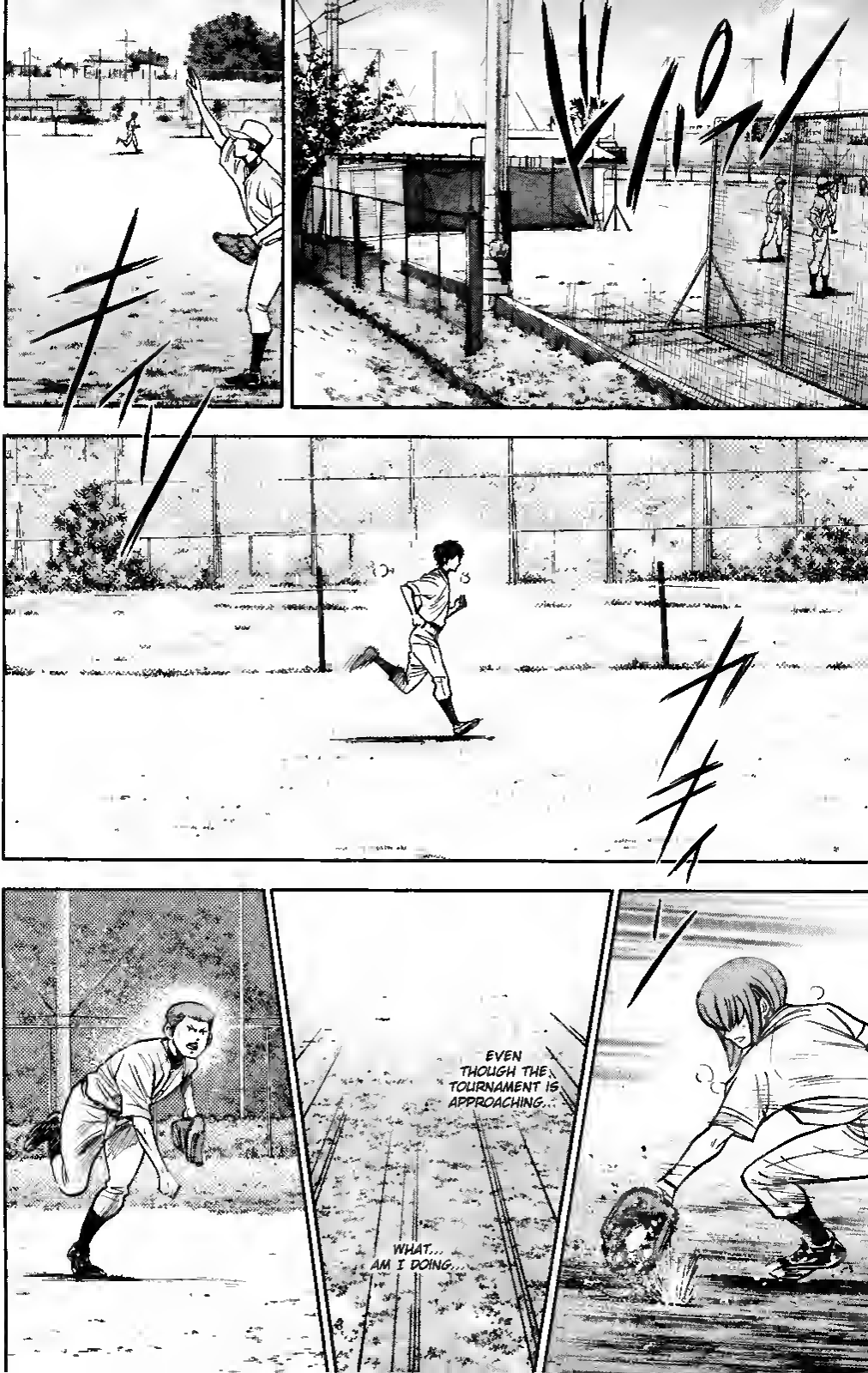

I'M ALSO PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SAWAMURA'S POOR PERFORMANCE IN THAT GAME
I TOLD HIM THAT HIS CONTROL WAS TOO WEAK AT EVERY SINGLE OPPORTUNITY DURING SUMMER BREAK.


IN THE GAME AGAINST YAKUSHI HE MUST'VE FELT THE CHALLENGE IN HIS OWN WAY
MORE SO SINCE FURUYA PERFORMED SO WELL RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM—

THAT DAY, HE LOST BEFORE HIS FIRST PITCH...
IN TERMS OF SPIRIT!
HIS STRENGTH IS IMPORTANT?
OF COURSE I HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF HIM AND WANT HIM TO GROW EVEN MORE!!!
IF— YOU KNOW THAT MUCH— WHY...

IF HE'S DESTROYED BY THE YIPS, I'M THE ONE WHO WOULD BE TROUBLED!
YOU... TALKING ABSURD.
I KNOW.

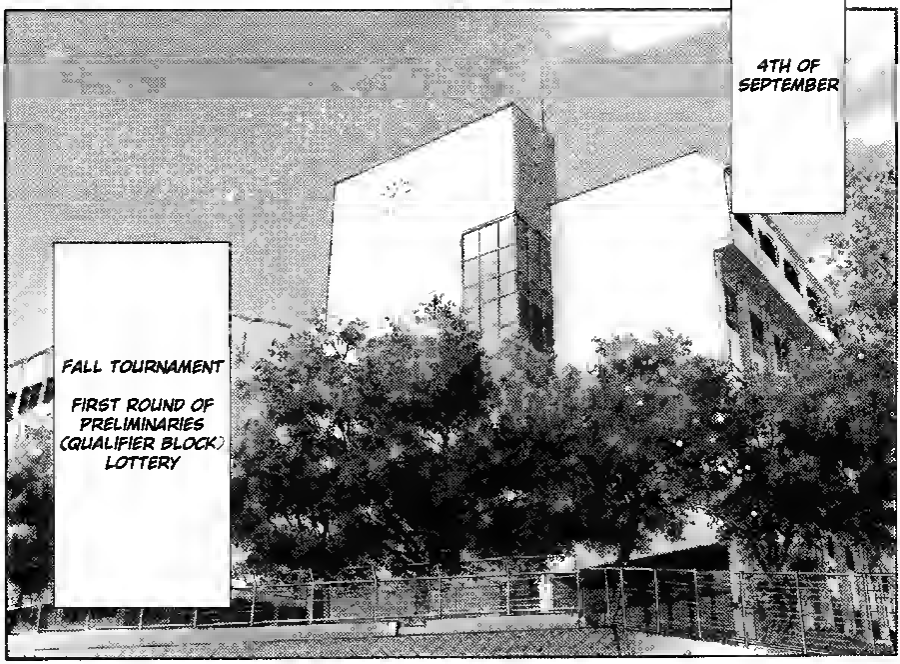
WITH THE TEAM'S CURRENT STATE, THIS IS MY CHANCE—!...
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO BE MINDFUL OF OTHERS...

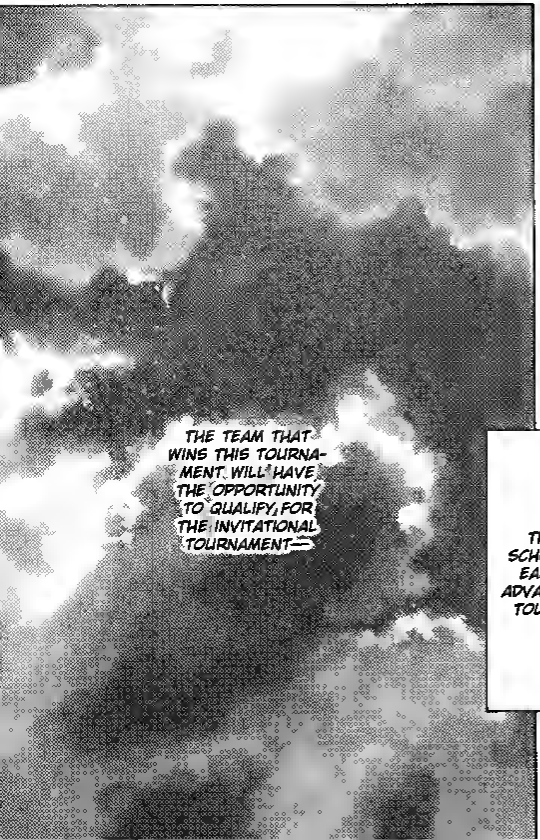

EVEN THOUGH THE TOURNAMENT IS APPROACHING...
WHAT... AM I DOING...

I CAN'T EVEN GET ONE OUT, MUCH LESS BECOME A STARTER...
NOT EVEN AN ACE...

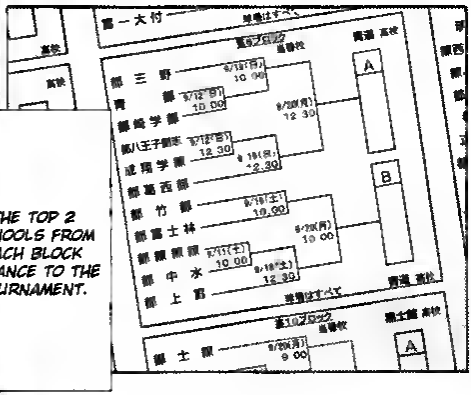
DAMN IT...

I AM WEAK—
キィン

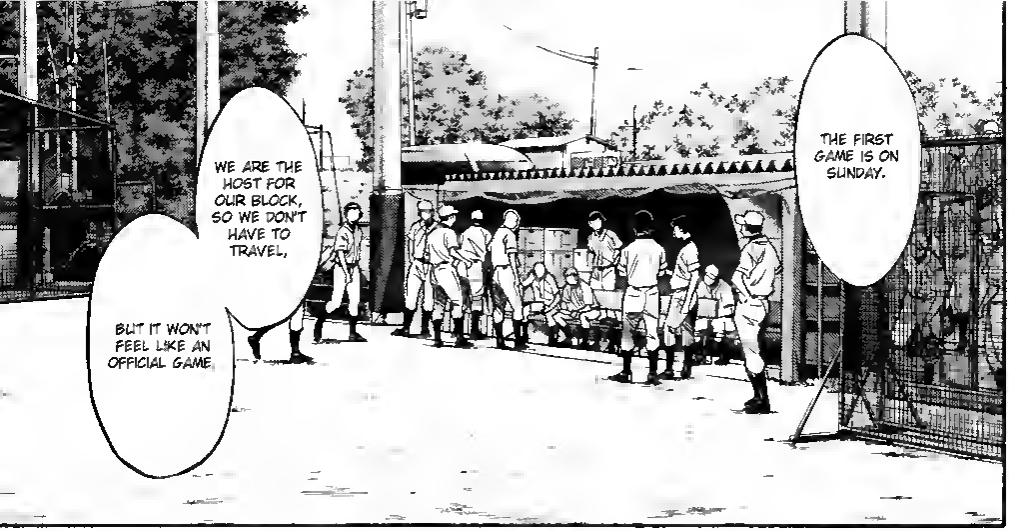

4TH OF SEPTEMBER
FALL TOURNAMENT
FIRST ROUND OF PRELIMINARIES (QUALIFIER BLOCK) LOTTERY

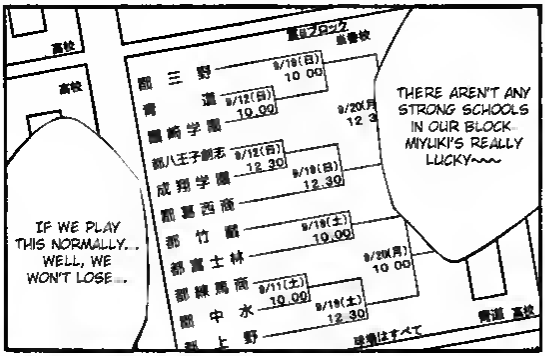

THE TEAM THAT WINS THIS TOURNAMENT WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO QUALIFY FOR THE INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT—

THE TOURNAMENT DIVIDES A TOTAL OF 260 SCHOOLS FROM EAST AND WEST INTO 24 BLOCKS.

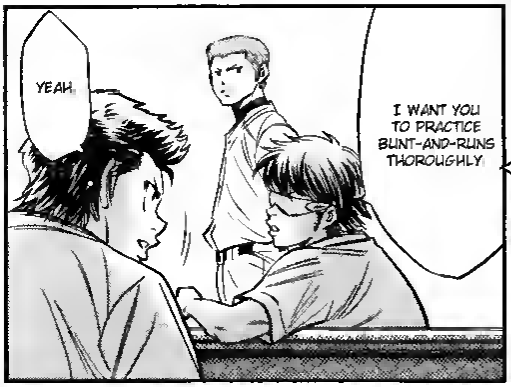

THE TOP 2 SCHOOLS FROM EACH BLOCK ADVANCE TO THE TOURNAMENT.

# Chapter 221 / Progress

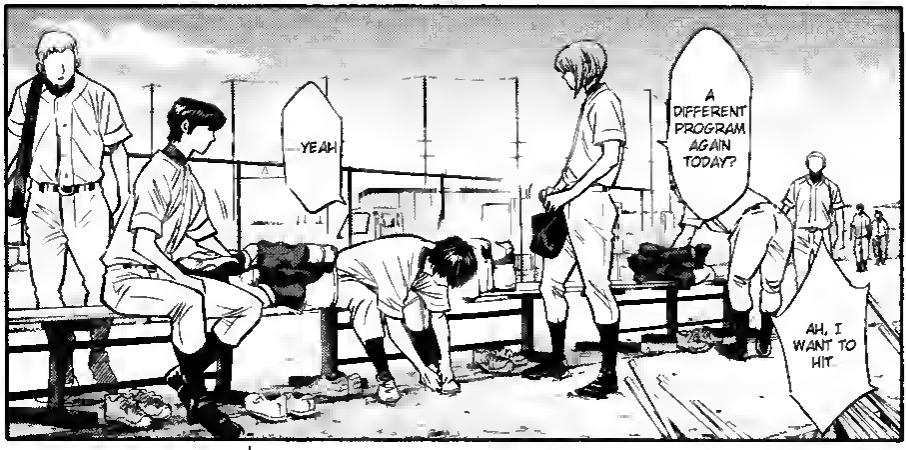


T/N: REFER TO THE MERCY RULE. MEANS NOT PLAYING THE FULL GAME


YEAH.
I WANT YOU TO PRACTICE BUNT-AND-RUNS THOROUGHLY.

FIRST, YOU HAVE TO GET HITS.
OF COURSE!!

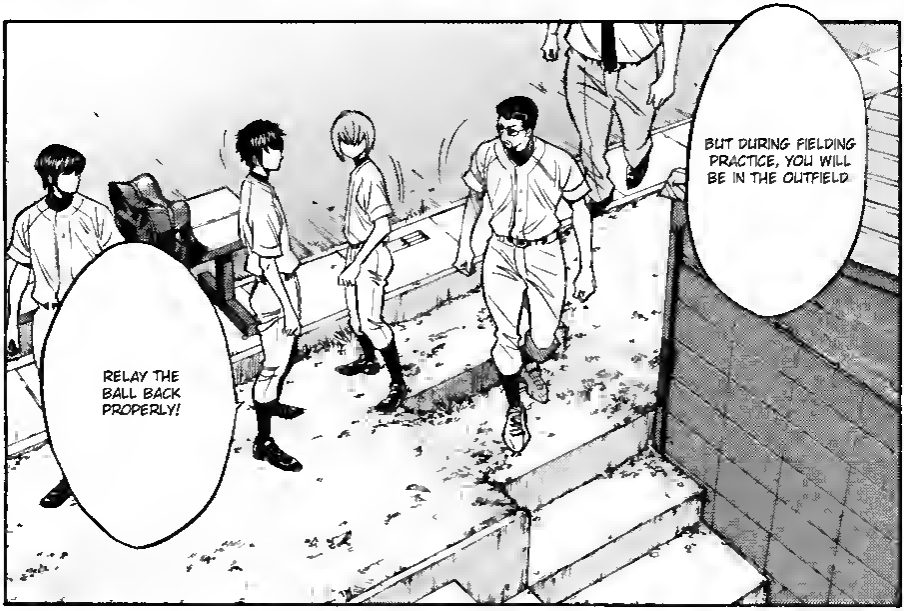

YEAH.
A DIFFERENT PROGRAM AGAIN TODAY?
AH, I WANT TO HIT.

SAWA-MURA!

THEY SAY THAT THE FOUNDATION OF PITCHERS IS THEIR LOWER BODY.
IT SHOULD BE FINE EVEN IF YOU DON'T PUSH IT...

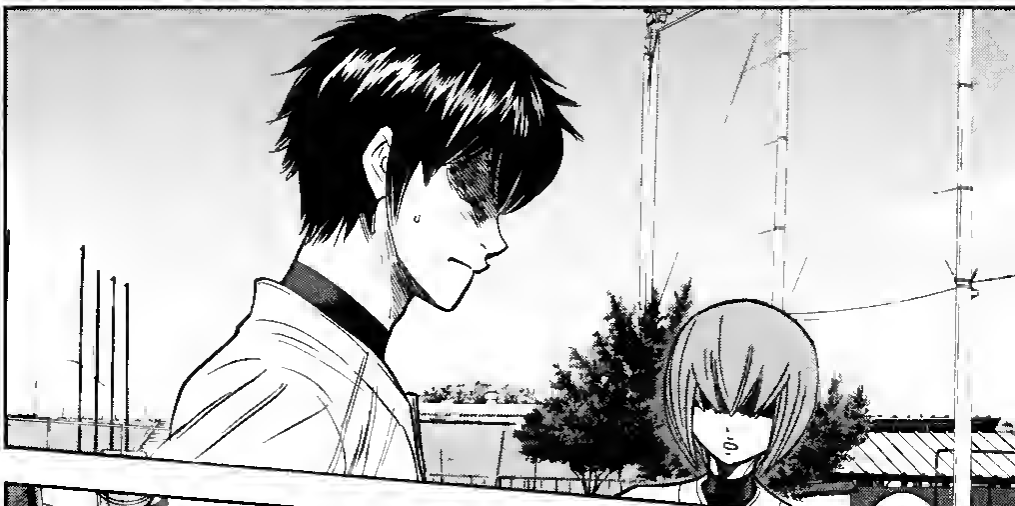
.....

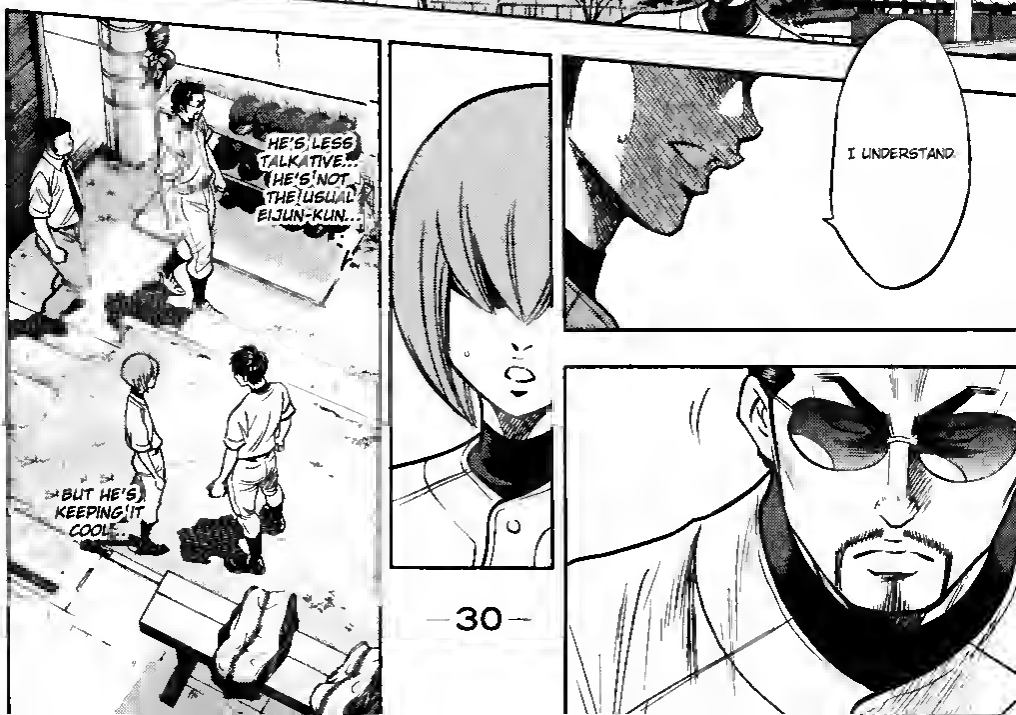
FROM TODAY ON, YOU'LL BE TAKING PART IN BATTING AND DEFENSE PRACTICE!
T/N: HARUCCHI BEST HUSBANDO!
ISN'T THIS GREAT? YOU CAN FINALLY TOUCH THE BALL AFTER A LONG WHILE .


BUT DURING FIELDING PRACTICE, YOU WILL BE IN THE OUTFIELD
RELAY THE BALL BACK PROPERLY!

UNDERSTAND?

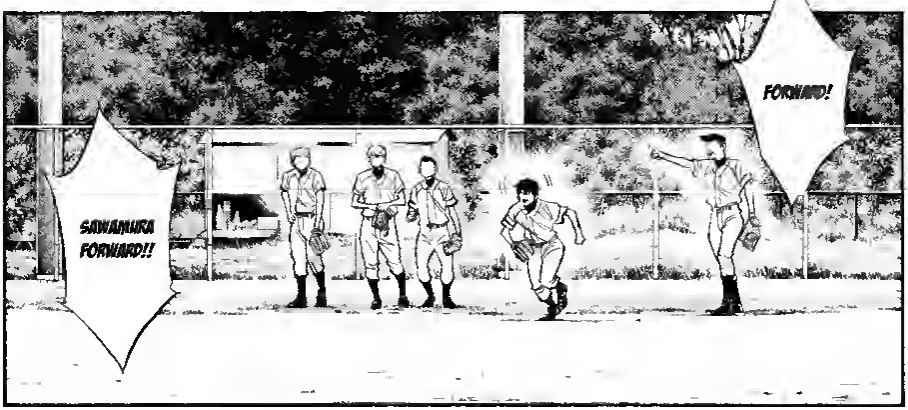
SO HE'S EXCLUDED FROM THE FALL TOURNAMENT LINEUP...
SAWAMURA IN THE OUTFIELD...




I UNDERSTAND.
HE'S LESS TALKATIVE... HE'S NOT THE USUAL EIJUN-KUN...
BUT HE'S KEEPING IT COOL.

SOMEHOW...
IT SEEMS LIKE HE CAN ACCEPT THE CURRENT SITUATION...
COVER BASES AND HANDLE BUNTS AS IF IT WERE A REAL GAME!
YES, SIR!
FURUYA! YOU WILL BE PITCHING FOR THE FIELDING PRACTICE TODAY AS WELL!
I WILL GIVE IT EVERYTHING I'VE GOT.
FACE YOURSELF...
HE...
HE'S NOT ACCEPTING IT AT ALL!!!

S
B
O
LET'S GO—
YEAH!

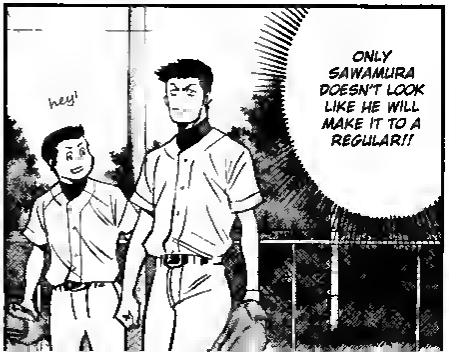

FORWARD!
SAWAMURA FORWARD!!

YOUR FIRST STEP IS TOO SLOW~~~!!
SEND THE BALL BACK PRONTO!

HMPH!
OK, NICE BALL!
ONLY YOUR THROW BACK IS GOOD, SAWAMURA!

ALTHOUGH HE'S STARTING FROM THE OUTFIELD...
YOU LET HIM JOIN THE TEAM PRACTICE EARLIER THAN I EXPECTED..

You're a good guy
SAWAMURA, RUN TO THE LANDING SPOT FIRST!

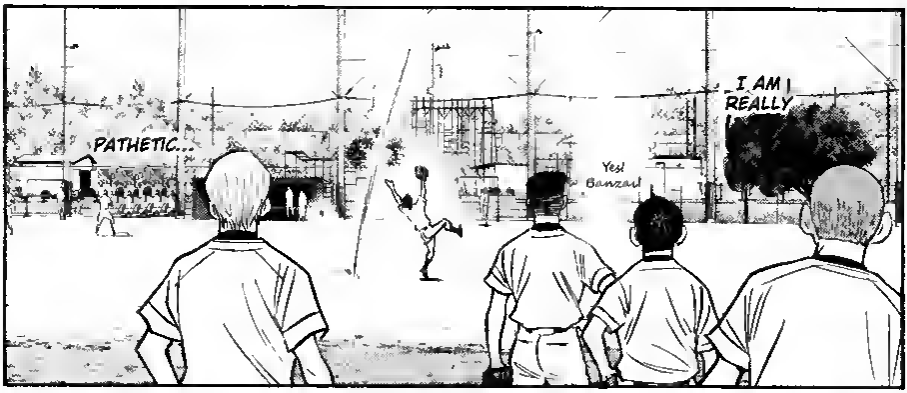

ONLY SAWAMURA DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE WILL MAKE IT TO A REGULAR!!
Hey!

I MADE HIM RUN FOR THE ENTIRE WEEK...
ALTHOUGH HE WAS LOOKING DOWN, HE GRADUALLY STARTED LIFTING HIS HEAD.
Huh?

HE WOULDN'T HAVE RAISED HIS HEAD—
IF HE DIDN'T HAVE TO WILL TO ADVANCE FORWARD,

SO THAT'S THE TRUE INTENTION OF THE DIFFERENT TRAINING SCHEDULE!?

AFTER ALL, HIS OWN DETERMINATION IS WHAT MATTERS THE MOST...
I GOT SCARED—...
BECAUSE I LACK STRENGTH...
BECAUSE I STILL LACK STRENGTH...
I WAS SENT TO THE OUTFIELD
HOW ABOUT THIS!




T/N: The banzai means something like hooray in Japanese. Usually said while lifting both arms high. He's referring to Sawamura's pose when catching (and missing) the ball.

THE PROBLEMS THAT SURFACED DURING THE GAME WITH YAKUSHI.
THE FIRST OFFICIAL GAME OF THE NEW TEAM.
WHILE CARRYING SEVERAL DOUBTS—...

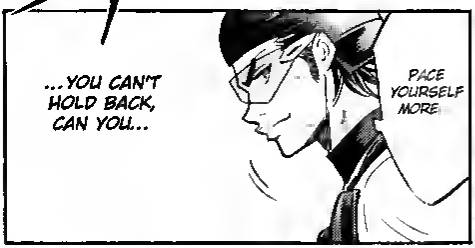
STRIKE!
BATTER OUT!!

1

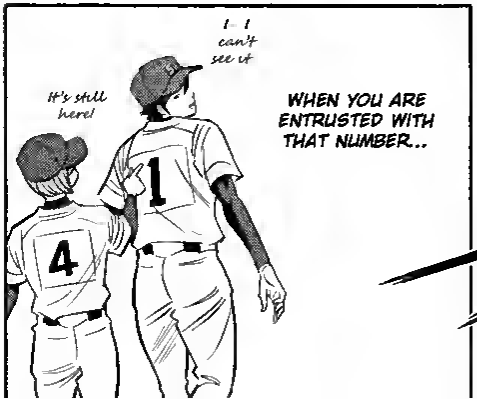
SEPTEMBER 12TH
IT'S NOT OVER YET!
GO FOR IT!
1ST ROUND OF FALL TOURNAMENT PRELIMINARIES (QUALIFIER BLOCK)
SEIDOU (WEST TOKYO) TOYOSAKI (EAST TOKYO)
(SEIDOU'S FIELD)

チーム
青道 1 2 0 0 1 0
豊崎 0 0 0 0 0 0
S
B
O

SUCH DIFFERENCE...
...


...YOU CAN'T HOLD BACK, CAN YOU...
PACE YOURSELF MORE.

HE'S THE ONLY ONE THAT STANDS OUT...


I- I can't see it
It's still here!
WHEN YOU ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THAT NUMBER...
1
4

UWOH— ANOTHER TIMELY HIT!!
DAMN HIM, DOES HE INTEND TO WIN ON HIS OWN!!
AMAZ-ING—
FURUYA IS IN TOP CONDITION.

HE'S STANDING OUT EVEN MORE WITH THE 3RD YEARS GONE
THE PRESENCE OF THAT GUY
1
JKYO
18
JKYO

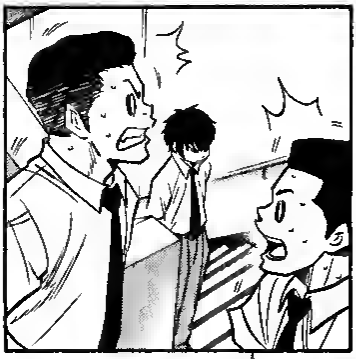
Chapter 222 /
Force of Attraction

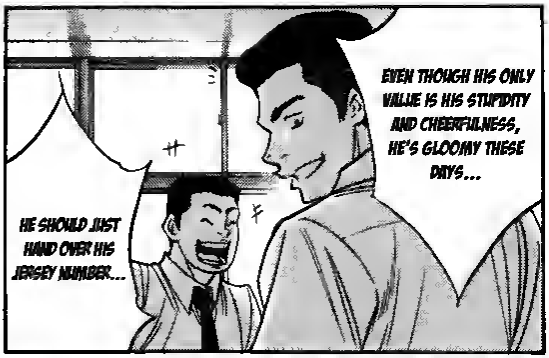
THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE YESTERDAY...
YEAH... FURUYA, RIGHT...

ALTHOUGH HE WAS TAKEN OFF THE MOUND IN THE 7TH INNING, HE PITCHED REALLY SAFELY.
WOULD IT BE A SURPRISE IF HE TAKES THIS TOURNAMENT ALL ON HIS OWN?

THAT GUY DIDN'T EVEN PITCH AT ALL LAST TIME...
WHY IS SAWAMURA ON THE TEAM!
BUT... WHAT I CAN'T AGREE WITH IS WHO GOT SENT TO THE DUGOUT.

TO BE HONEST, THAT TRICKY PITCH ISN'T MUCH OF A WEAPON...
NO WAY, NO WAY!
EVEN AN ELEMENTARY KID FIELDS BETTER THAN HIM!!
He wasn't made it!
COULD HE BE ENTERED AS AN OUTFIELD PLAYER?

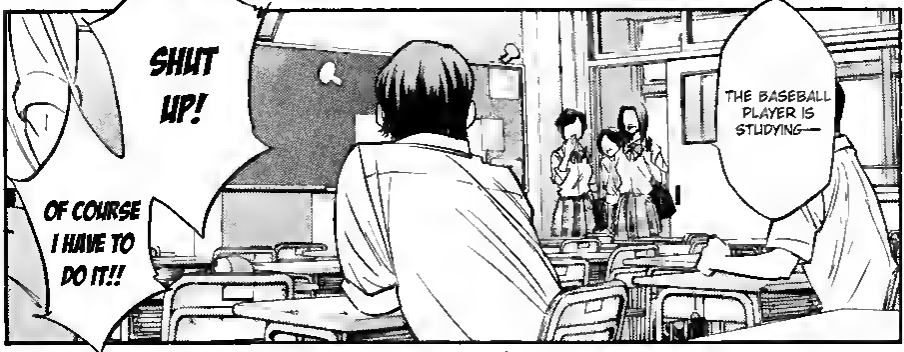


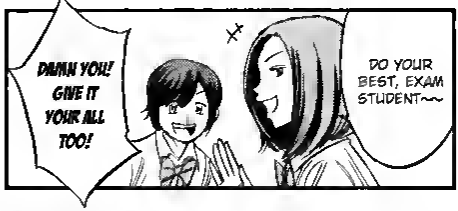

HE SHOULD JUST HAND OVER HIS JERSEY NUMBER...
EVEN THOUGH HIS ONLY VALUE IS HIS STUPIDITY AND CHEERFULNESS, HE'S GLOOMY THESE DAYS...

HOW... HOW MUCH HAVE YOU HEARD...
HAHAHA... BUT THAT'S THE TRUTH, ISN'T IT!?
STOP WITH THAT FACE—

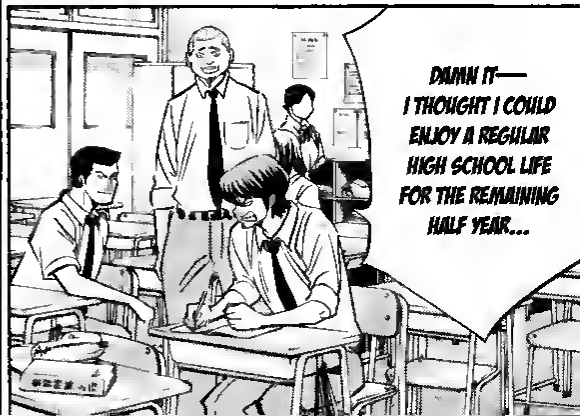
SAWA-MURA!!

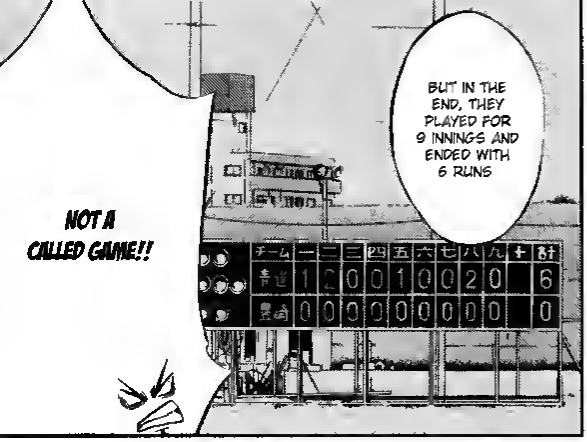
AH!


THE BASEBALL PLAYER IS STUDYING—
SHUT UP!
OF COURSE I HAVE TO DO IT!!


DO YOUR BEST, EXAM STUDENT~~
DAMN YOU! GIVE IT YOUR ALL TOO!

BY THE WAY, HAS THE QUALIFIER BLOCK STARTED YET?

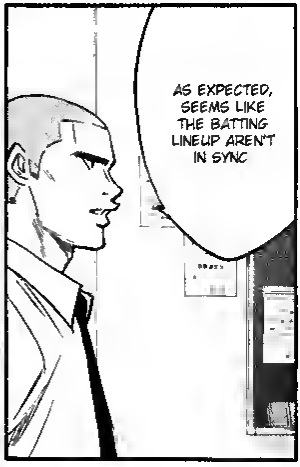

DAMN IT— I THOUGHT I COULD ENJOY A REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL LIFE FOR THE REMAINING HALF YEAR...


NOT A CALLED GAME!!
BUT IN THE END, THEY PLAYED FOR 9 INNINGS AND ENDED WITH 6 RUNS

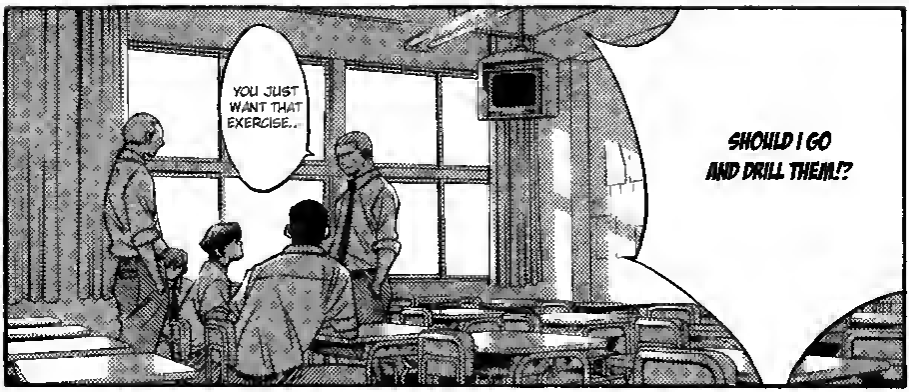
I HEARD ABOUT IT.
SOUNDS LIKE FURUYA'S BEEN VERY ACTIVE.

YEAH.
WHAT ARE THEY DOING! MIYUKI, IMEZONO, AND KURAMOCHI!!
IF THEY'RE BATTING, THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO GET MORE RUNS!!

AFTER THE GAME AGAINST YUKUSHI, THE COACH CLEARLY STATED IT'S POSSIBLE HE'LL EVEN REPLACE THE REGULARS.
IN THE END, THE STARTERS WERE THE SAME AS USUAL...


AS EXPECTED, SEEMS LIKE THE BATTING LINEUP AREN'T IN SYNC

HM... EVEN THOUGH HE'S STRICT, THE COACH STILL TRUSTS THE PLAYERS.


YOU JUST WANT THAT EXERCISE..
SHOULD I GO AND DRILL THEM!?

Hmm
WELL, THAT'S FOR SURE...
THE FALL TOURNAMENT IS WHEN WE FIND MORE PROBLEMS WITH EVERY GAME WE PLAY...
EVEN IN OUR TIME, HE WAS PROBING AT FIRST...

I REALLY WANT TO PLAY...
DAMN...

WHAT I CAN'T AGREE WITH IS WHO GOT SENT TO THE DUGOUT
WHY IS SAWAMURA ON THE TEAM!
I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN IN THE BULLPEN FOR MANY DAYS...
I CAN'T EVEN PLAY THE OUTFIELD AT ALL...
WHY AM I GIVEN A NUMBER?
EVEN I DON'T KNOW WHY!!

WHAT DOES THE COACH WANT FROM ME—...

IN THE END... I WASN'T ALLOWED TO PITCH UNTIL THE END AGAIN.
FURU...

EVEN THOUGH I WAS GIVEN THIS JERSEY NUMBER..
I AM STILL NOT TRUSTED AS THE ACE...
I WON'T LET ANYONE COMPLAIN AT ALL...
...
NO MATTER THE RESULTS...
OR THE METHOD...

MY PITCHING THAT IS
ACKNOWL-EDGED BY EVERYONE—

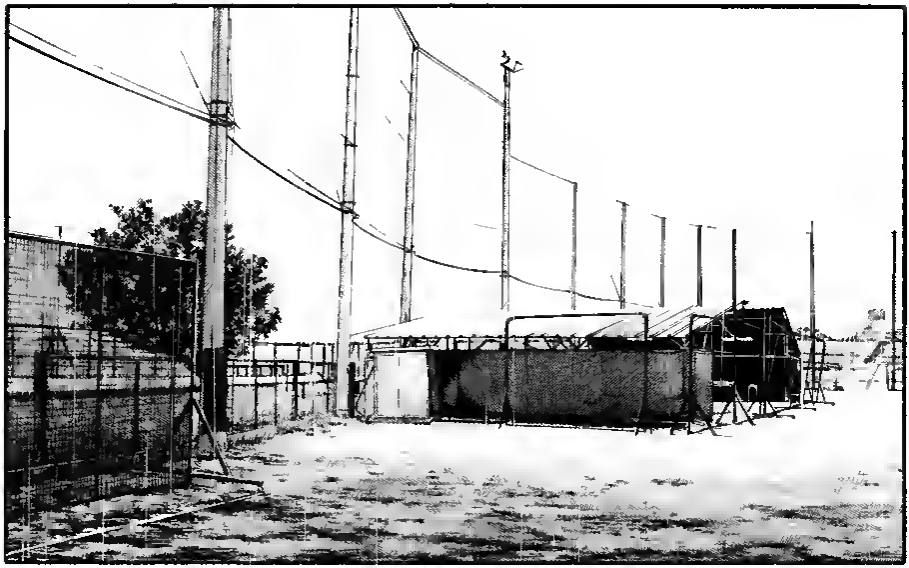
Y...
YOU...
...AHEAD OF ME
SINCE WHEN DID IT BECOME A SPRINT BE-TWEEN THE POLES...
DON'T YOU RUN AHEAD OF ME!!

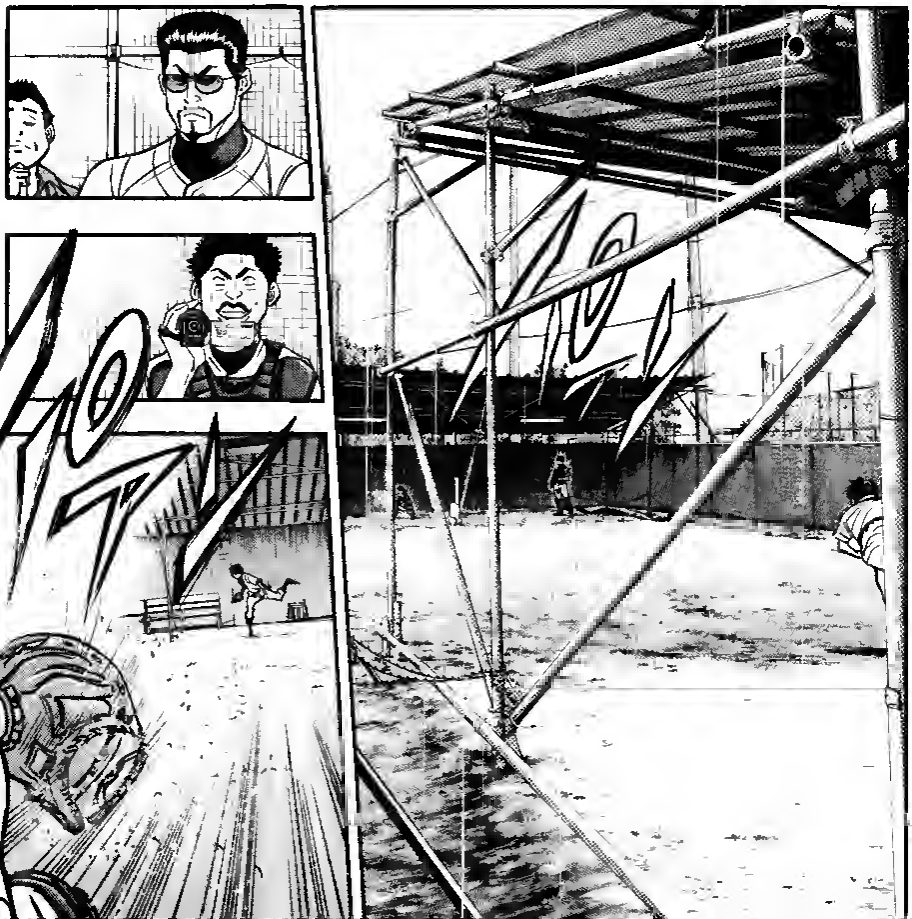
WHAT'S WITH HIM.. ISN'T HE ENERGETIC? SAWAMURA, THAT GUY...
SO FURUYA IS THE ONE HE DOESN'T WANT TO SHOW WEAKNESS TO...
I'M ALREADY FIRED UP!!
ONE WAY OR NOTHER, WE HAVE TO GET MORE RUNS!
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT OUR KOHAI...
HMPH.

TRAINING STILL HASN'T STARTED YET.
THINK ABOUT PACING YOURSELVES
DAMN. BEING UNABLE TO PACE MYSELF IS A HUGE PROBLEM
S
B
O

AH... YES.
SEEMS LIKE YOU ARE FULLY WARMED UP.

SAWAMURA... GET IN THE BULLPEN!!





AREN'T YOU PITCHING WELL, SAWAMURA..
.....

NICE BALL!
PITCH A GOOD ONE!!

YOSH! I WILL STAND IN THE BATTER'S BOX FOR THE NEXT ONE!!
PITCH AN INSIDE CORNER!

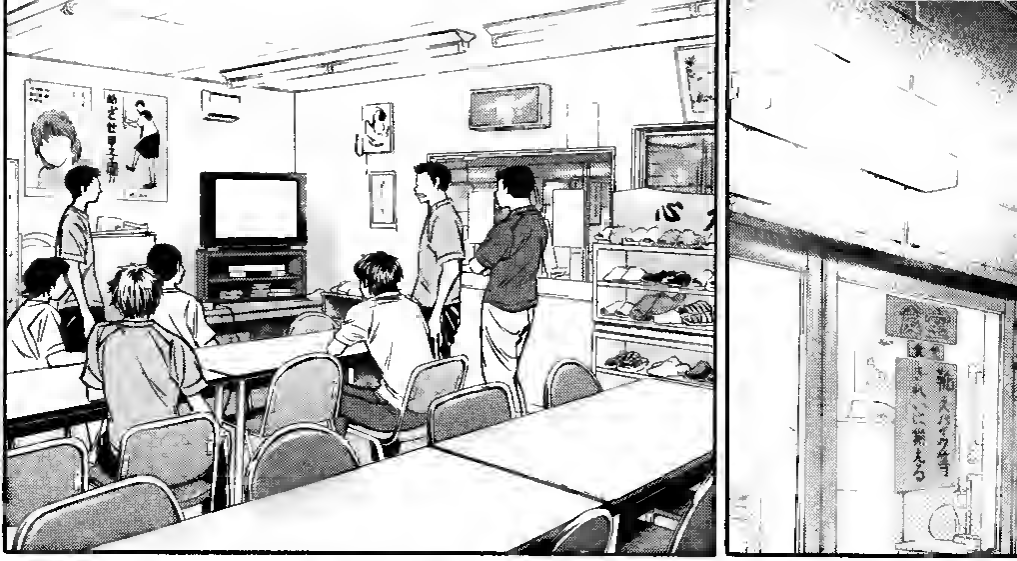
I FULLY EXPECTED SAWAMURA TO MAKE IT TO THE DUGOUT,
BUT IS THE COACH PLANNING TO USE HIM IN THIS TOURNA-MENT?
CAPTURE HIS FORM PROPERLY!
OKAY!

BRING IT ON...
SAWAMURA HAS THE WILL TO PITCH...
.....

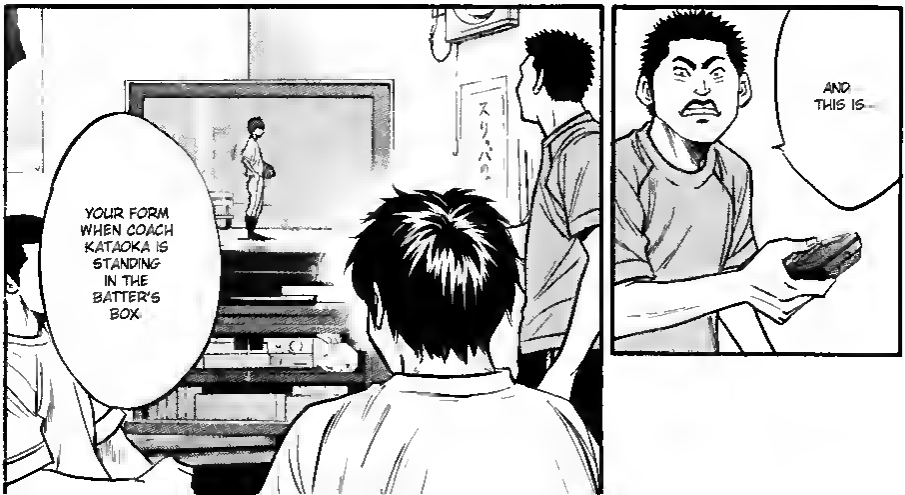
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN THE PROBLEM IS HIS FORM...

WHEN THE COACH IS IN THE BATTER'S BOX, HE SUDDENLY...
.....!!
.....
WHY IS COACH KATAOKA WILLING TO STICK WITH IT TO THIS POINT
THIS PITCHER IS USELESS—...

Chapter 223 /
Sacrificial Pawn



THIS IS YOUR FORM WHEN THERE AREN'T ANY BATTERS


YOUR FORM WHEN COACH KATAOKA IS STANDING IN THE BATTER'S BOX
AND THIS IS...

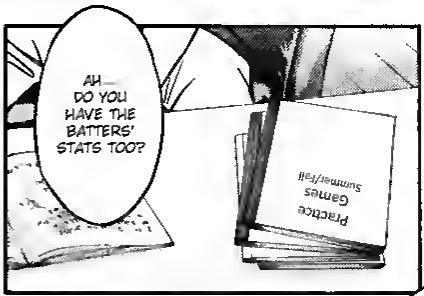
YOUR DELIVERY...
ALTHOUGH YOU DIDN'T CHANGE UNTIL HALFWAY THROUGH...
I SPECIALIZE IN FINDING MISTAKES!!
HUHmmm? IS THAT SO?
YOU DIDN'T FOLLOW THROUGH!
SEE, THIS!!
IF HIS BROKEN FORM WAS EASIER TO UNDERSTAND, I WOULD EXPLAIN IT TO HIM BUT...
IF I TELL HIM THAT, HE'LL BE TROUBLED...

BUT HE'S TOO CONCERNED WITH PITCHING TO THE INSIDE CORNER.
SINCE EVERYONE DIFFERS PSYCHOLOGICALLY, THIS IS DIFFICULT.
THEY SAY THERE ARE CASES WHERE IT'S POSSIBLE TO RECOVER WITH THE RIGHT APPROACH.
THAT MIGHT BE WHY HE DOESN'T FOLLOW THROUGH...
WE'VE BEEN PUSHING HIM A LITTLE TOO MUCH LATELY

SAWAMURA
DON'T CONFUSE YOURSELF THINKING ABOUT THE DIFFICULT STUFF.
YOUR CONTROL WAS NEVER GOOD TO BEGIN WITH...
SINCE YOU'RE STUPID.
MI. MIYUKI-SENPAI..
THAT'S

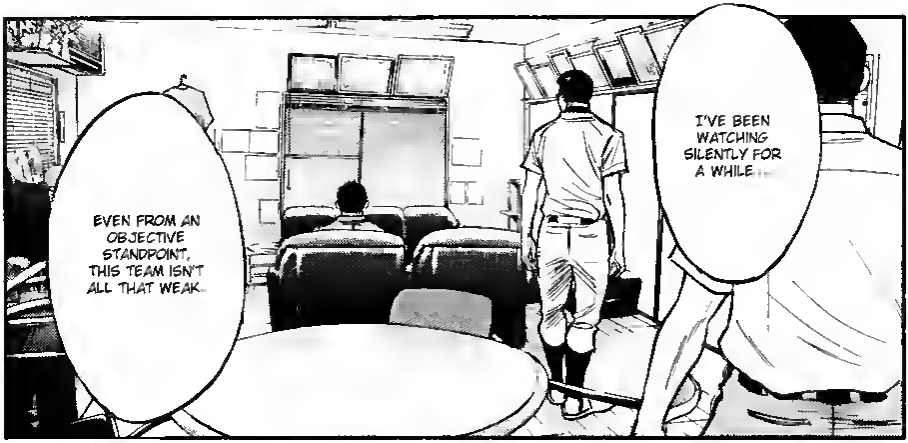
SIGN: STAFF ROOM

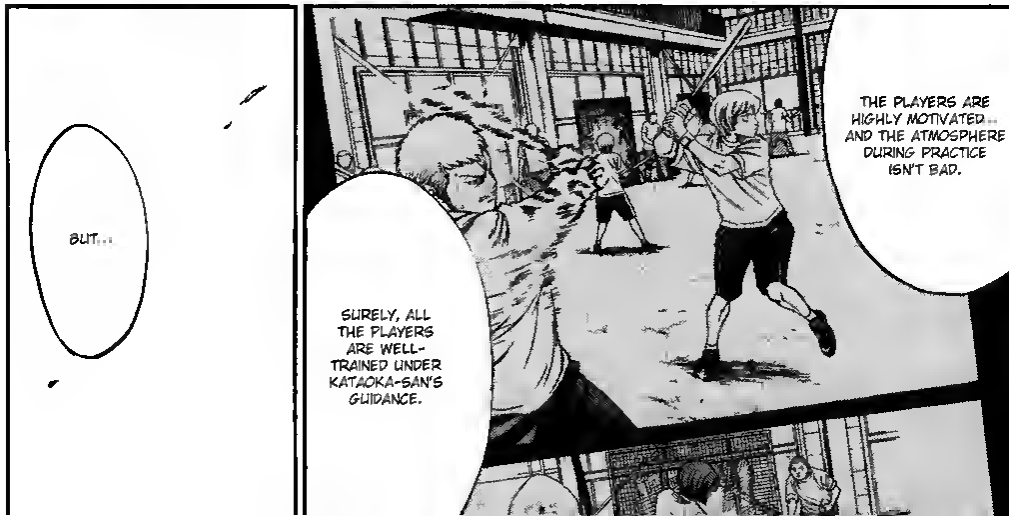
TAG: HE GOT A BASEBALL BAT UP HIS ASS. THAT'S WHAT



GOOD WORK TODAY, COACH
YEAH. THERE ARE STILL SOME PLAYERS PRACTICING.
THE 2ND YEARS ARE VERY FIRED UP THESE DAYS. .
I OFTEN SEE MAEZONO TAKING PRACTICE SWINGS.
HONESTLY SPEAKING, HOW HIGH ARE YOU AIMING
FOR THIS FALL TOURNAMENT?
KATAOKA-SAN

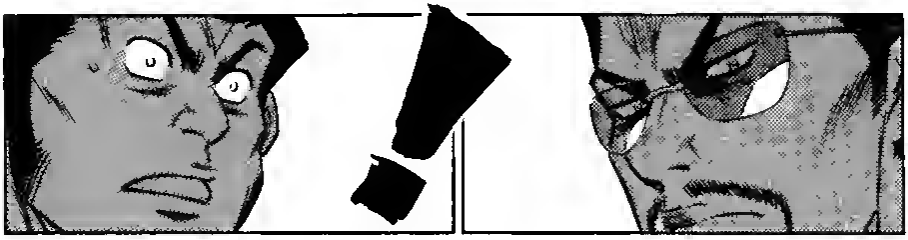
Monthly Schedule
.....


I'VE BEEN WATCHING SILENTLY FOR A WHILE...
EVEN FROM AN OBJECTIVE STANDPOINT, THIS TEAM ISN'T ALL THAT WEAK...


BUT...
SURELY, ALL THE PLAYERS ARE WELL-TRAINED UNDER KATAOKA-SAN'S GUIDANCE.
THE PLAYERS ARE HIGHLY MOTIVATED... AND THE ATMOSPHERE DURING PRACTICE ISN'T BAD.

IT IS HARD FOR THE CURRENT TEAM TO DOMINATE IN THE FALL TOURNAMENT.
IN YOUR SHOES, I WOULD AIM FOR KOSHIEN NEXT YEAR.
D-DO YOU HAVE TO BE SO BLUNT!?
WHAT...

THIS FALL IS A JOINT SUICIDE WITH FURUYA!


!

THAT...
THAT... IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WOULD SACRIFICE THE FALL TOURNAMENT FOR FURUYA'S GROWTH...!?

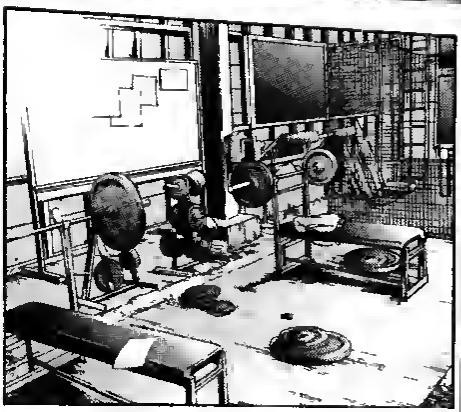
NO MATTER HOW BAD HIS CONDITION IS, NO MATTER HOW MANY RUNS HE GIVES UP, LET HIM PITCH THE WHOLE GAME BY HIMSELF.
MIGHT AS WELL LET THIS ACE BE THE CLEANUP BATTER,
SINCE HIS BATTING IS GOOD AS WELL.

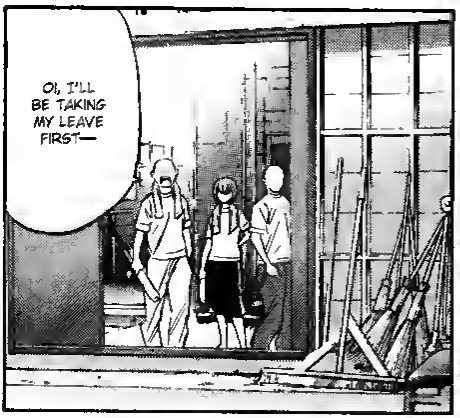
YEAH... ISN'T IT MORE THAN ENOUGH AS LONG AS HE HAS THE AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCE OF HIMSELF AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEAM?
IT'S WORTH DOING FOR HIM...
BUILD FURUYA UP AS AN ACE
WOULDN'T YOU SAY THIS IS THE EASIEST SHORTCUT TO KOSHIEN?

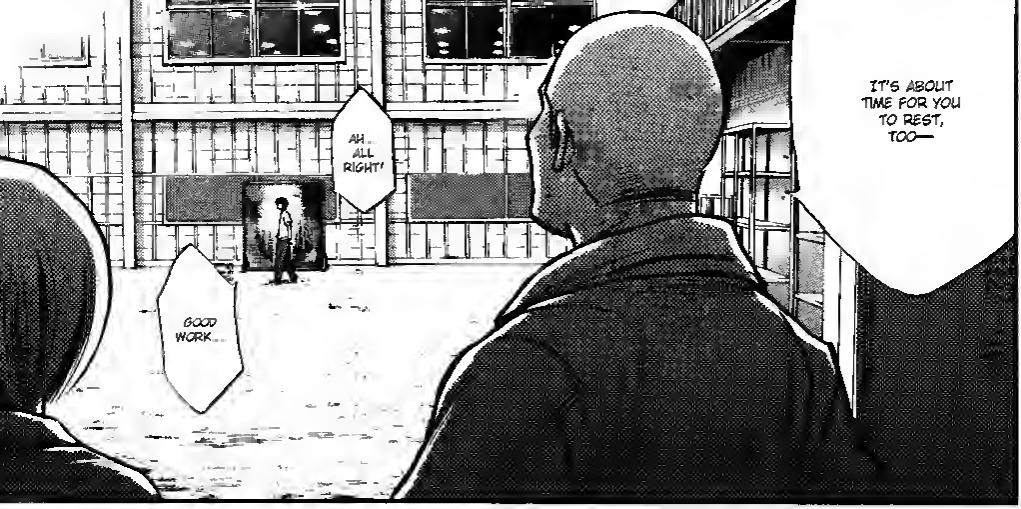
BUT THE PLAYERS ARE THE ONES WHO WANT TO PLAY IN THE KOSHIEN
THIS FALL TOURNAMENT IS ALSO ONE OF THE LESS TRAVELED PATHS TO KOSHIEN—

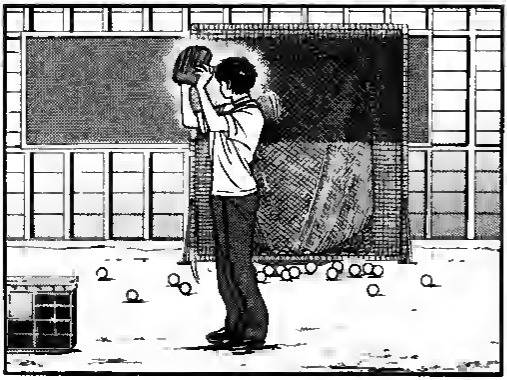
T/N HE MEANS THE SPRING TOURNAMENT. SPRING AND SUMMER EACH HAVE A GAME LEADING TO KOSHIEN

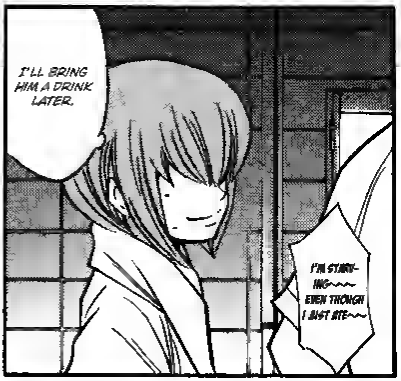
I DON'T PLAN ON SACRIFICING THE ENTIRE TEAM JUST FOR FURUYA.
.....

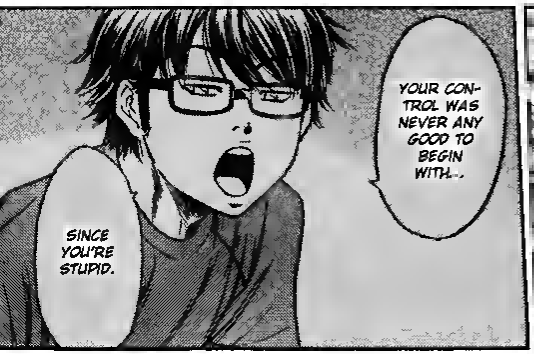



OI, I'LL BE TAKING MY LEAVE FIRST—


IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR YOU TO REST, TOO—
AH... ALL RIGHT
GOOD WORK...




I'LL BRING HIM A DRINK LATER.
I'M STARV-ING~~~ EVEN THOUGH I JUST ATE~~


YOUR CONTROL WAS NEVER ANY GOOD TO BEGIN WITH...
SINCE YOU'RE STUPID.

DON'T CONFUSE YOURSELF THINKING ABOUT THE HARD STUFF.

DAMN!!!
. THAT BASTARD, SAYING WHATEVER HE WANTS AGAIN~~~
IS HE EVEN AWARE THAT HE'S THE CAPTAIN!?

WAS NEVER ANY GOOD TO BEGIN WITH...
MY CONTROL ESPECIALLY...
BUT...
HE'S RIGHT...

YOU'RE PITCHING QUITE A LOT.

DID YOU PAY PROPER ATTENTION
TO YOUR GRIP FOR EVERY PITCH?

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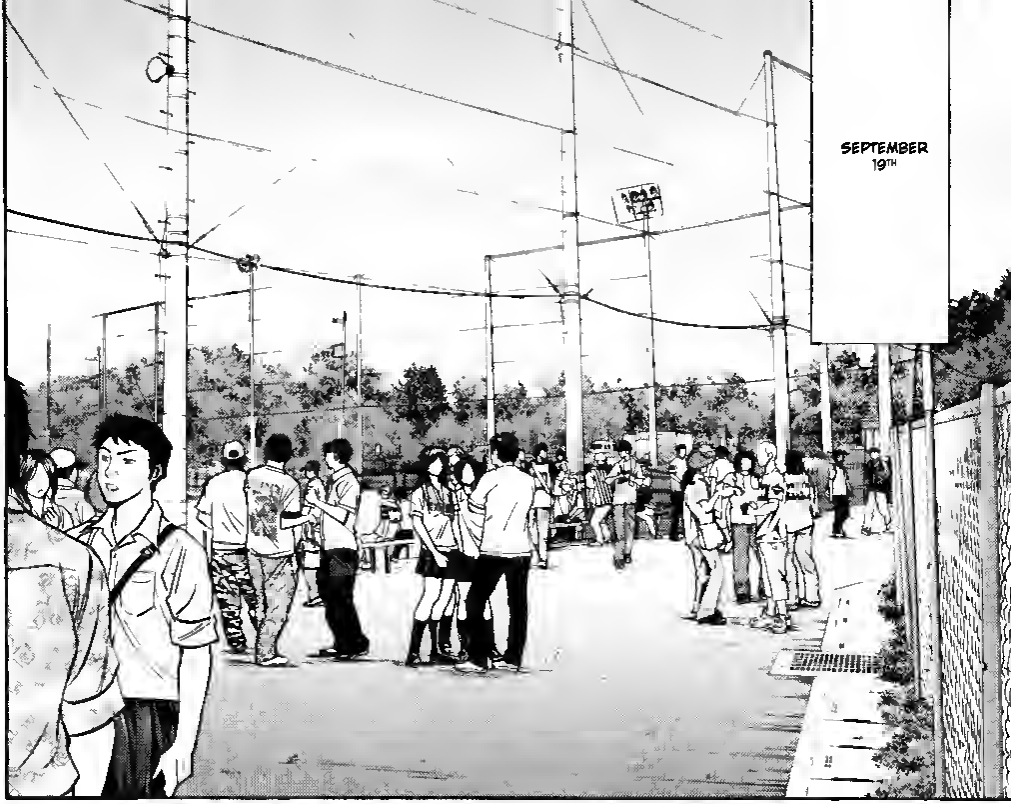
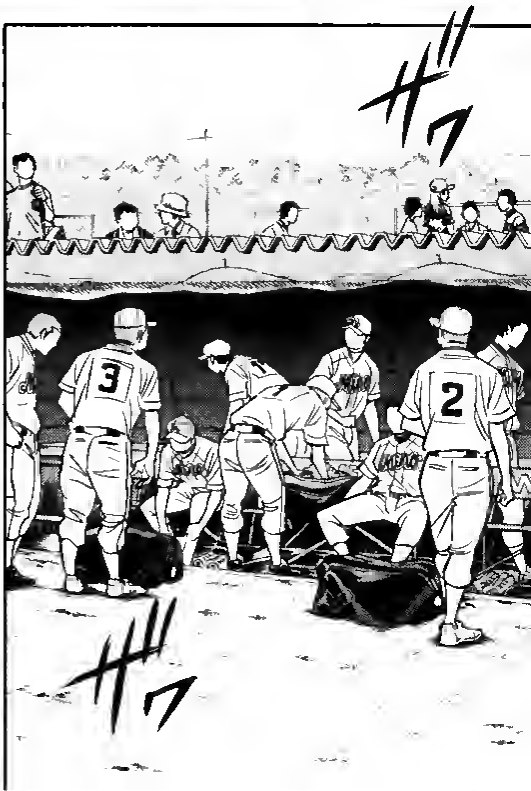
WANNA PITCH A FEW?

# Chapter 224 / The Final Lesson


SEPTEMBER
19TH

DAMN, THAT'S A 1ST YEAR

BEATEN BY THAT PITCHER SINGLE-HANDEDLY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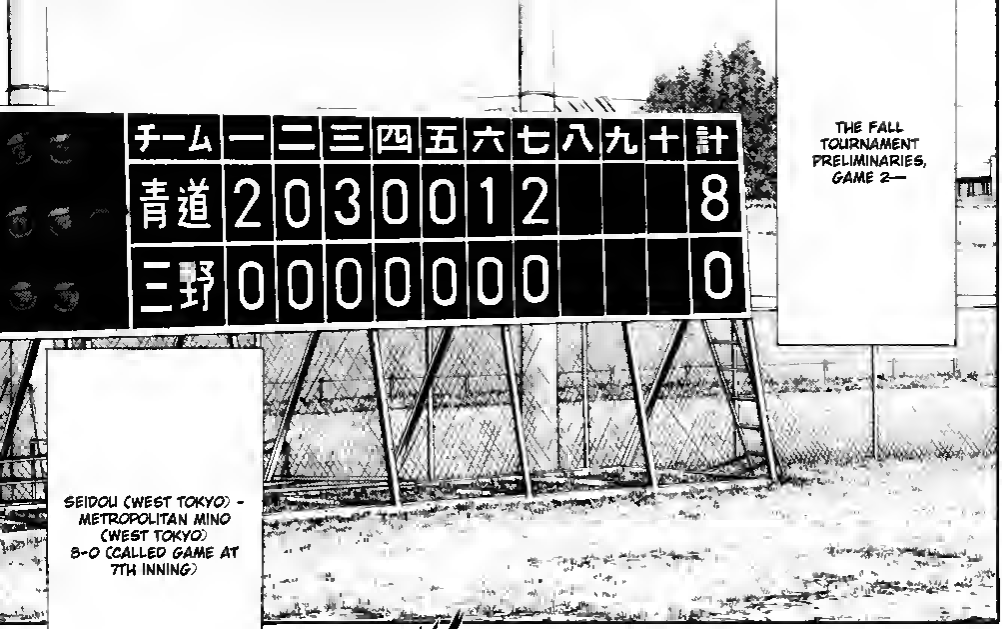
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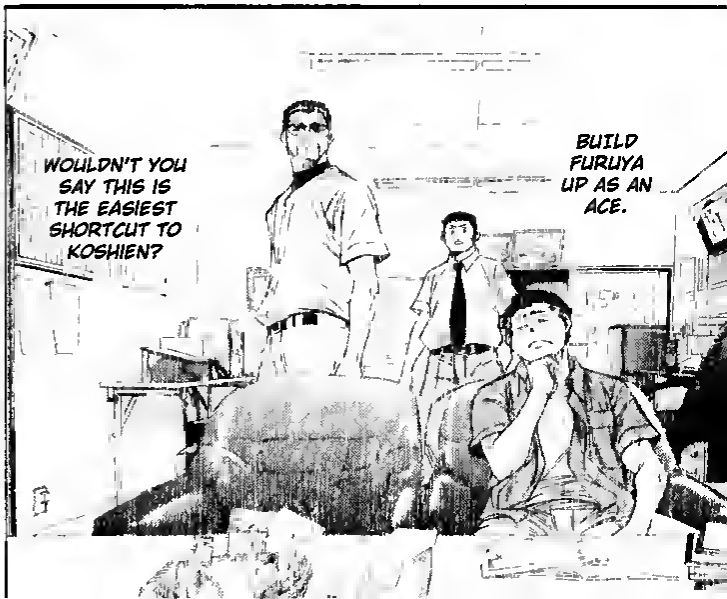
青道 2 0 3 0 0 1 2 8
三野 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
THE FALL TOURNAMENT PRELIMINARIES, GAME 2—
SEIDOU (WEST TOKYO) - METROPOLITAN MINO (WEST TOKYO) 8-0 (CALLED GAME AT 7TH INNING)
TN:METROPOLITAN MEANS IT'S A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN CONTRAST TO SEIDOU- A PRIVATE SCHOOL

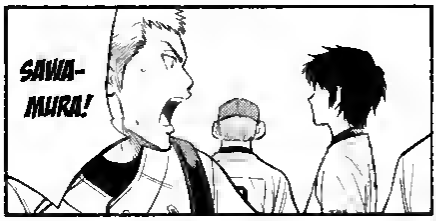
12 STRIKE OUTS.
HE GOT 2 HITS AND 3 RBI.
...
HE'S STILL A 1ST YEAR IF HE'S TRAINED WELL, THEY COULD AIM FOR KOSHIEN
MIKE

IN YOUR SHOES, I WOULD AIM FOR KOSHIEN NEXT YEAR.

...

THIS FALL IS A... JOINT SUICIDE WITH FURUYA—...
TOKY


WOULDN'T YOU SAY THIS IS THE EASIEST SHORTCUT TO KOSHIEN?
BUILD FURUYA UP AS AN ACE.

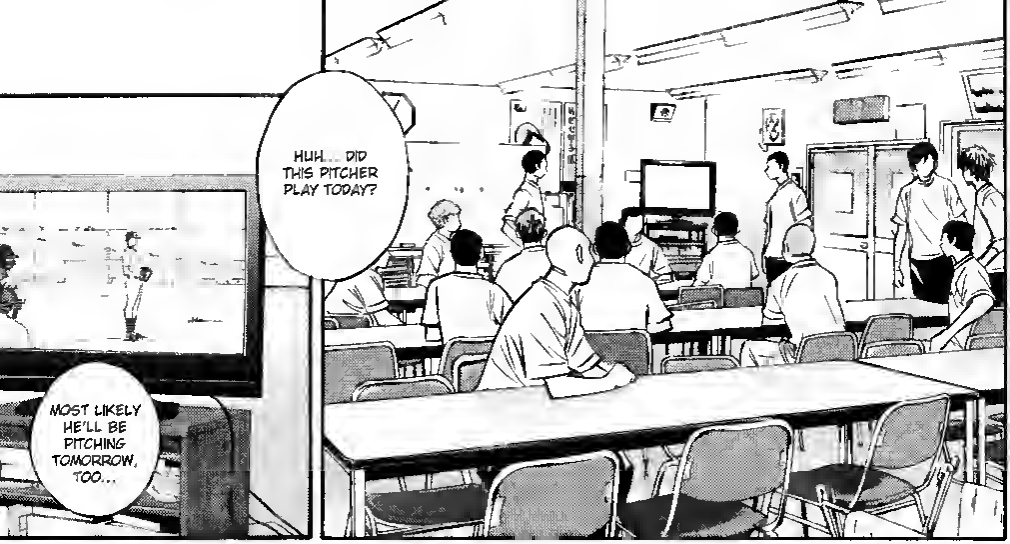

SAWA-
MURA!

YOUR PITCH COUNT IS TOO HIGH AND YOU WALKED THE BATTERS TOO MUCH.
YOU'RE NOT EVEN THINKING OF PACING YOURSELF
YOU'RE NO GOOD AT ALL!! OUR OPPONENT SAVED YOU TODAY
THE USUAL EVALUATION MEETING

CLEAN UP THE DUGOUT QUICKLY!
THERE'S ANOTHER GAME AFTER THIS!

THERE IT IS! THERE IT IS!
A myriad of expressions!
DEAL WITH IT, LIKE A MAN!
KANE-MARU. .
Huh!?

CAN YOU PRACTICE WITH ME LATER?


HUH... DID THIS PITCHER PLAY TODAY?
MOST LIKELY HE'LL BE PITCHING TOMORROW, TOO...

I'M SAYING THAT IT'S AN INFIELD HIT!
THAT WAS AN ERROR
WHAT ABOUT IT, MANAGER!
UWAH! THE ONE AT THE 4TH INNING IS AN ERROR BY THEIR OPPONENT.

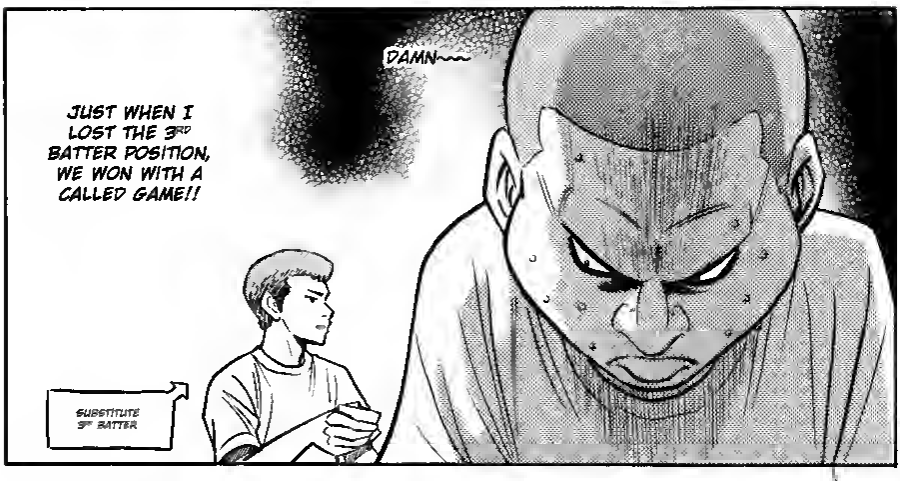
YOU'LL BE PITCHING AGAIN TOMORROW.
SLEEP EARLY TONIGHT!
I WILL PITCH AS MANY AS IT TAKES.
...
RIGHT! THEN IT'S AN ERROR~~!!
わはははは
FOR REAL!?
THE COACH CALLED IT AN ERROR.

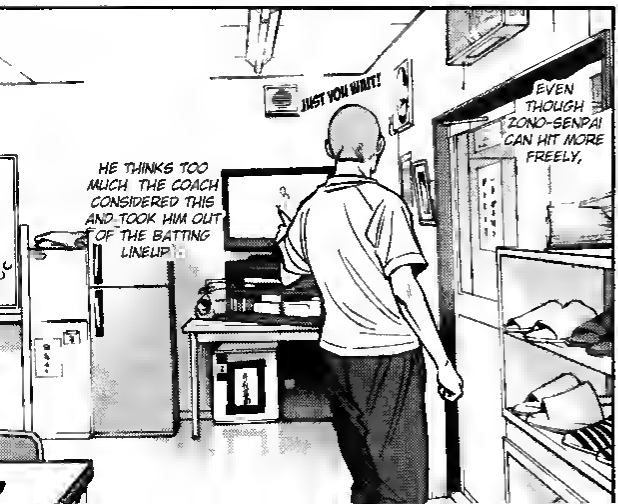
AFTER ALL, AN ACE IS SOMEONE WHO CAN PLAY WHENEVER HE'S NEEDED...

THERE ARE NO STRONG SCHOOLS IN THIS BLOCK, SO EVEN IF BY A LITTLE, WE HAVE TO LOWER THE BURDEN ON YOU BY WINNING IN CALLED GAMES...
WE WON'T LET YOU PITCH AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE

ZONO-SENPAI.

THE PITCHER TOMORROW IS MOST LIKELY A SOUTHPAW. I HAVE TO PROPERLY HIT IT OVER THE 2ND BASEMAN'S HEAD, TO RIGHT FIELD
ARE YOU DOING EXTRA TRAINING TODAY, TOO?
HUH? YEAH.


DAMN~~~
JUST WHEN I LOST THE 3RD BATTER POSITION, WE WON WITH A CALLED GAME!!
SUBSTITUTE 3RD BATTER


JUST YOU WAIT!
EVEN THOUGH ZONO-SENPAI CAN HIT MORE FREELY,
HE THINKS TOO MUCH. THE COACH CONSIDERED THIS AND TOOK HIM OUT OF THE BATTING LINEUP.

I WILL HIT IT TOMORROW!!
HIT TO RIGHT FIELD

I EVEN CAME IN FULL ARMOR BECAUSE SAWAMURA LOWERED HIS HEAD AND BEGGED ME.
OI, OI, WHAT'S GOING ON!?

BUT HE STILL CAN'T PITCH TO THE INSIDE CORNER AT ALL.
TCH... I'M NOT THAT EASY
NO... KANEMARU, THAT'S NOT IT...
...
YOU CALLED ME OUT SINCE YOU THOUGHT IT'S ALL RIGHT TO HIT ME.
DIDN'T YOU!?
AT THIS RATE, I CAN'T PRACTICE EVADING AT ALL!
DAMN YOU! DON'T EVEN DARE HOLDING BACK!

WHY I AM PLAYING THIS KIND OF ROLE...
KEEP PITCHING WITH THE INTENTION OF BREAKING ME DOWN!
COME ON, BRING IT!
A real man Kanemaru
THANK YOU... KANEMARU...
I NEVER PLANNED TO HIT YOU FROM THE START.
LIAR!
IT'S THE TRUTH

2 DAYS PRIOR
NICE BALL.

AREN'T YOU PITCHING IT WELL?
NO..
THAT'S BECAUSE THERE AREN'T ANY BATTERS NOW.
BUT... MOST LIKELY I AM OVER-THINKING IT...
MIYUKI-SENPAI SAID THAT MY CONTROL WAS NEVER ANY GOOD AT ALL.
HAHAHA.. ALTHOUGH IT'S STILL IRRITAT-ING...
AN INSIDE CORNER CLOSE TO THE BATTER'S CHEST..

PASSING THROUGH THE PLACE FURTHEST AWAY FROM THE BATTER'S LINE OF SEIGHT—
IN CONTRAST
A LOW, OUTSIDE PITCH
A LOW PITCH YOU'RE TOO FOCUSED ON...
THE BATTER WON'T EVEN REACT TO IT.
IF YOU CAN SEND YOUR PITCH HERE ACCURATELY
OF COURSE, IT'S MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN USED TOGETHER WITH INSIDE CORNER PITCHES.
IT CAN EVEN GET YOU AHEAD IN THE COUNT
MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, IT CAN BECOME THE FINAL, DECIDING PITCH.

SOMEONE LIKE YOU, WHO DEVOTED HIMSELF TO ATTACKING ALL THIS TIME...
THIS IS THE PITCH I WANT YOU TO LEARN THE MOST.

YOU KEPT ASKING FOR INSIDE CORNER PITCHES
IF YOU'D ASKED FOR OTHER JUMPS, I WOULD
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU JUST SAY? SAY SOME MORE...
THE WAY YOU ARE NOW...DO YOU FEEL CONFIDENT PITCHING TO THE OUTSIDE CORNER?
CAN YOU PITCH NOW, BREAKING BALLS?
NO... THAT'S...
DAMN
A LOW, OUTSIDE...

THERE'S NO NEED TO PITCH TO THE INSIDE CORNER IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO DO SO.
FOR WHEN THAT TIME COMES HOW ABOUT POLISHING THIS PITCH
ONE MORE!
ONE STEP... NO... ADVANCING EVEN HALF A STEP...
IT'S OUT OF THE ZONE AGAIN—
DAH~~~ DAMN...

THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS
THAT I LACK—...
NO, TOO EASY!
ONE MORE!!
OI .. IS THAT ONE ALL RIGHT?
ハァ!

IF IT BECOMES A GOOD OPPORTUNITY...
SORRY THAT EVEN YOU HAD TO BE BROUGHT IN TO HELP OUT, CHRIS-SENPAI.
NO, IT'S SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY TO HIM...
ALTHOUGH IT'S FRUSTRATING, IT'S MORE EFFECTIVE THAN ME...
LET'S GO—!!
WHAT'S LEFT IS HOW HE WILL OVERCOME THIS HIMSELF...

# Chapter 225 / Pitfall

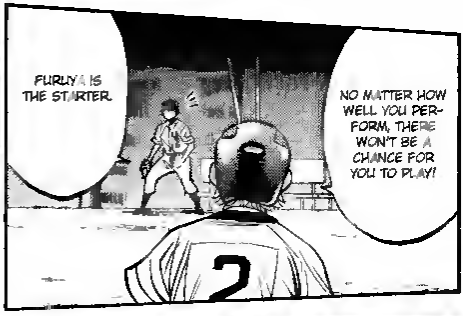
SEPTEMBER 20TH
Wow~~~
IT'S RISING A LITTLE
KEEP IT LOW
WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME
FURUYA SEEMS TO BE IN GOOD SHAPE
JERSEY NUMBER 1 SUITS HIM~~

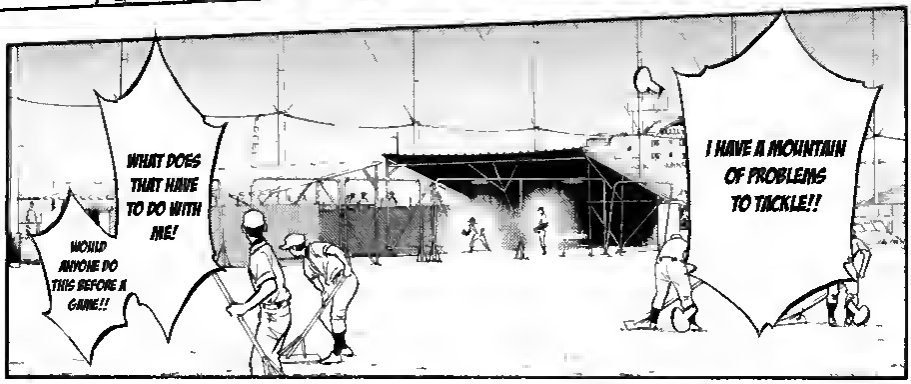
青道
AS EXPECTED. THAT GUY IS THE STARTER~
HE ALSO STRUCK OUT A LOT OF BATTERS YESTERDAY.
HUNH!?
LET'S GO OUT THERE AND CRUSH OURSELVES...
NO.
LET'S FIGHT AGAINST THEM WITH THE INTENTION OF LEARNING FROM THE BEST.
HE'S A HIGH SCHOOLER LIKE US. THERE'S NO NEED TO FEAR HIM!!
ISN'T IT A JOY FOR US TO HIT PITCHES LIKE THAT?
SEISHOU ACADEMY
ODAGIRI JOU

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE BATTING LINEUP'S ACTION TOO
NOW—WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU, FURUYA
GET THE TEAM INTO THE TOURNAMENT PROPERLY
YOSHAA—

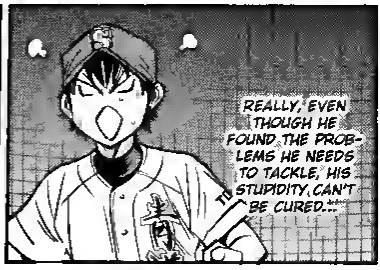
I KNOW THAT!!
BUT AM I NOT ALLOWED TO PITCH IN THE BULLPEN IF I'M NOT THE STARTER!?

He's loud...
WAS THAT ONE ALL RIGHT? ONE MORE PITCH BEFORE I FORGET!


FURUYA IS THE STARTER.
NO MATTER HOW WELL YOU PERFORM, THERE WON'T BE A CHANCE FOR YOU TO PLAY!


I HAVE A MOUNTAIN OF PROBLEMS TO TACKLE!!
WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME!
WOULD ANYONE DO THIS BEFORE A GAME!!

FURUYA, LAST ONE!!
IF A NOISY ONE LIKE HIM COULDN'T BOUNCE BACK, I WOULD BE BORED, TOO...


REALLY, EVEN THOUGH HE FOUND THE PROBLEMS HE NEEDS TO TACKLE, HIS STUPIDITY CAN'T BE CURED...

BUT, WELL...

OK! GO BACK!!
GRR
Lighten up!
2
HE'S NOT AFFECTED BY THE FATIGUE FROM PITCHING CONTINUOUSLY...
EVEN THOUGH IT RISES A LITTLE, HIS PITCHES HAVE POWER
MY SHOULDER FEELS SO LIGHT...

I MIGHT BE ABLE TO BEAT MY OWN RECORD TODAY—
S
B
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S
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O
チーム
一
二
三
成翔
青道

成翔学園
EXCEL-
LENT——

PITCHER FURUYA IS IN A HUGE PANIC!
青道
JUST AS HE TAKES THE MOUND, HE'S ALREADY WALKED 3 BATTERS!!
LET THEM HIT IT!
NO BIG DEAL.

YOU'RE TRYING TOO HARD! LOOSEN UP, FURUYA.
WITH THEIR BATTING LINEUP, YOU CAN HOLD THEM OFF WITH JUST HALF YOUR STRENGTH!
HE'S AFFECTED BY CONTINUOUS PITCHING.
HARD TO TELL.. HIS PITCHES SEEM FAST.
MORE...
NOT BAD...
HIS CONDITION ISN'T BAD AT ALL...
PITCH BETTER—

WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO HOLD DOWN THE OPPONENT WITH BRUTE FORCE.
成翔
2
ARE YOU TRYING TO PLAY BASEBALL BY YOURSELF?
LOOK AROUND YOU MORE!

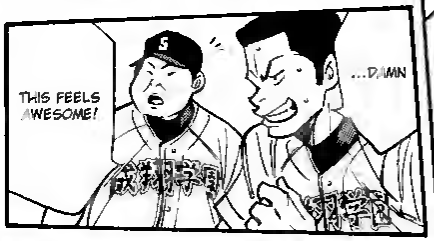
FURUYA-KUN...
CALM DOWN——!!
IT'S JUST THE 1ST INNING.
NORI, HURRY—
FURUYA...
FURUYA—...
NO... I NEVER INTENDED TO PLAY ON MY OWN...
HIT THE PITCHES THAT ARE RIGHT IN THE CENTRE! RIGHT IN THE CENTRE!!
YOU'LL MAKE IT EASY ON THE PITCHER IF YOU SWING AT THE DIFFICULT PITCHES~~

MUCH MORE—
IT'S JUST... TODAY...
I FEEL THAT I CAN DO BETTER—

おおお
おお
BASTARD!
WASN'T THAT A REALLY EASY PITCH!?
3RD RUN——!!
1
青道

うおーい
うおーい

UWOH! IS THIS FOR REAL!?
IT'S FOR REAL. OOKU-BO—!!


THIS FEELS AWESOME!
...DAMN

I NEVER THOUGHT WE'D EVER BE ABLE TO SCORE 3 RUNS. THAT'S HOW WEAK OUR BAT-TERS ARE
HEHE, IN YOUR FACE!!

T... THIS IS REALLY BAD... AND IT'S JUST THE 1ST INNING...

FURUYA!
CALL KAWAKAMI!
HUH!?
TAKE LEFT FIELD.

HE'S SUBBED REALLY EARLY.
HAS KAWAKAMI WARMED UP...
I'M MORE WORRIED ABOUT HIM!
10
COOL YOUR HEAD IN LEFT FIELD.
IT CAN'T BE HELPED. YOUR PERFORMANCE TODAY IS TOO AWFUL.

YOU HAVE 7 PRE-GAME PITCHES... CALM DOWN!
DON'T MIND THE RUNNER AND GET THEM OUT ONE BY ONE!
#17
PITCHERS HAVE GOOD AND BAD DAYS, SO THIS IS NOTHING UNEXPECTED...
GET A CHANGE OF PACE!
#11
EVEN SO, THE OPPONENT IS WEAK...
青道
IT'S TOO EARLY TO GIVE IT UP—...
AT THIS RATE, THIS ISN'T THE WAY TO BUILD UP AN ACE...
#17

EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE RISKS, YOU SHOULD LET HIM REGAIN HIS FOOTING ON HIS OWN IN THE GAME.
BECAUSE THIS EXPERIENCE WILL CONNECT TO GIVING HIM A BOOST IN HIS GROWTH—...
SAWAMURA! GO WARM UP!
YES!!
Although I'm already warmed up
THIS MEANS... I GET TO PLAY?

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エース

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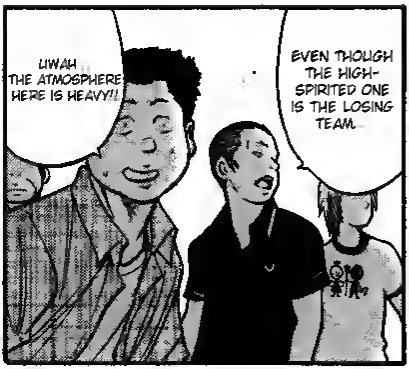
B
O
チーム 一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 計
成翔 4 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 4
青道 0 0 2 0 0 1 2 1 X 6

YEAH. WE MIGHT HAVE LOST.

BUT THE PLAYERS DID WELL.

九 十 計
0 4
X 6
THANK YOU FOR TODAY.



JUST KNOWING THAT IS ALREADY A HUGE GAIN FOR US!
EVEN THE BEST ARE NOT BEYOND REACH!
NOW, LET'S GO BACK TO OUR TOWN WITH OUR HEADS HIGH!

# Chapter 226 / Anger

.....

青道

IS THIS
THE BASEBALL YOU WANT TO PLAY?

SWINGING YOUR BAT WILDLY DURING YOUR AT-BAT BECAUSE YOU ARE DISSATISFIED FOR BEING SUBSTITUTED
NOT EVEN FOCUSING ON DEFENSE
A PITCHER WHO FROM THE 1ST INNING GOES ALL OUT WITHOUT PACING HIMSELF...
DAMN.
TO
MAKING MISTAKES DUE TO LOW FIGHTING SPIRIT, JUST FROM FALLING BEHIND 4 RUNS
...
MISUNDERSTANDING ENTHUSIASM
FURUYA'S HITTING WELL TODAY
I HAVE TO SETTLE THIS

SWINGING AT THE FIRST, DIFFICULT PITCH—
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR REGRETS FROM THIS SUMMER?
MIYUKI.

BECAUSE YOU ARE NEVER AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EVERY SINGLE RUN, YOU PLAYED LIKE THIS!!
WHY DO YOU PRACTICE EVERY DAY!?
ISN'T IT ALL FOR THE SAKE OF TODAY!!
IT'S JUST THE PRELIMINARIES?
DON'T GET SO FULL OF YOURSELVES!!
YOU THINK THAT WINNING IS A GIVEN BECAUSE THERE ARE NO STRONG SCHOOLS IN YOUR BLOCK!?

HOW CAN A TEAM OF PLAY-ERS WHO CAN'T STAND UNITED WHEN PLAYING THE GAME IN FRONT OF THEM
GO TO KOSHIEN!!

I CAN'T HEAR YOU!
YOU WON'T BE TOUCHING THE BALL FOR NOW!
RUN UNTIL I TELL YOU TO STOP!!
Y... YES, SIR!!
UWAH—
二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 計
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 4
1 2 1 X 6
WE'RE STRESSED OUT EVEN THOUGH WE WERE JUST WATCHING.
THEY CAUGHT UP AND TIED THE SCORE IN THE 7TH INNING.
MOVE IT!
THE COACH IS REALLY ANGRY...
APPEARS SO, SINCE IT'S ENDLESS.
AS EXPECTED, IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THE 1ST INNING.

EVEN THOUGH HE GAVE UP A RUN IMMEDIATELY AFTER HE WAS SENT IN...
KAWAKAMI REALLY SAVED THE DAY...
HE PITCHED WELL TILL THE END.
...
EVEN AT THE SUMMER PRELIMINARIES, HE SOMETIMES GAVE UP RUNS IN THE 1ST INNING...
FURUYA NEEDS TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS WHEN HE'S ON THE MOUND
IN THE END, THOSE 4 WALKS IN THE BEGINNING COMPLETELY DESTROYED THE RHYTHM OF THE GAME
...
INSTEAD OF RELYING ON EXCEPTIONAL GOOD DAYS OF PITCHING,
ISN'T IT BETTER TO FIND OUT HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OUT OF A BAD DAY?
THE ACE IS SOME-ONE WHO SHOULD DO THIS FOR EVERY GAME!

D...mmmf...
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING...
WELL, I WASN'T ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THAT!!
W-WHAT'S THAT ABOUT! COACH ALWAYS SCOLDED ME FOR THIS TOO...
I FINALLY GET IT AFTER RETURNING FROM THE TRAIN...

ONE, TWO!
ONE, TWO!
WELL... RIGHT NOW, THEY ARE SCOLDED BY THE COACH
THEY HAVE TO TACKLE THEIR PROBLEMS ONE BY ONE!

ONE! TWO!

ONE TWO
I WANT TO REDO TODAY...
THREE FOUR

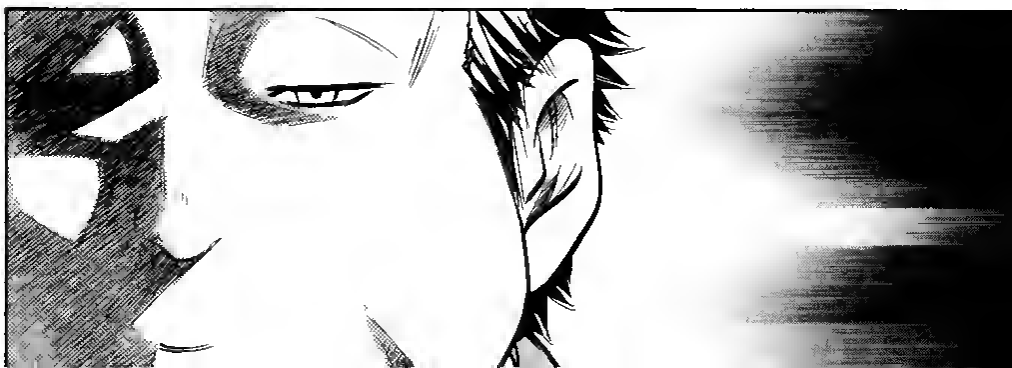
ONE TWO
I DIDN'T GET TO PLAY
THE ONE WHO WAS GETTING READY FROM 1ST INNING TO 9TH INNINGS.
THREE FOUR

YELLING AT THE PLAYERS AND LETTING THEM RUN WHILE YELLING AT THE TOP OF THEIR LUNGS

This is going to take a while
MANAGER, TURN THE LIGHTS ON!
A ALL RIGHT

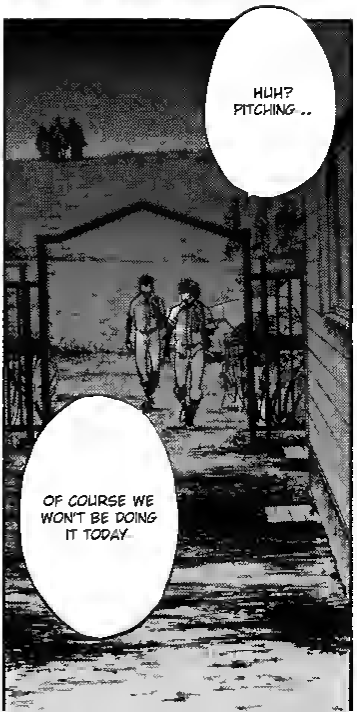
IT'S FINE FOR THE PLAYERS OF SIMILAR STRENGTHS FROM MANY TEAMS TO DO SUCH A THING...
ONE TWO
THREE FOUR
THIS IS SO TRADITIONAL AGAIN.

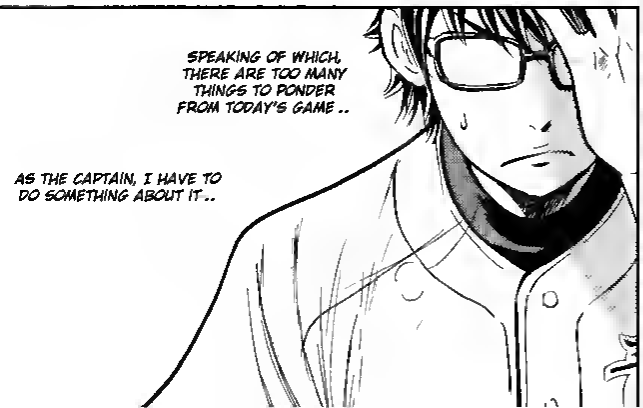
BUT THERE IS NO NEED FOR TALENTED PLAYERS TO TAKE PART IN SUCH A THING DELIBERATELY—...

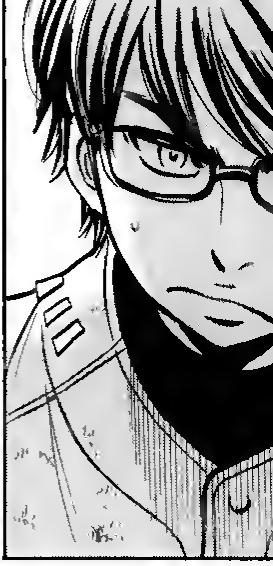


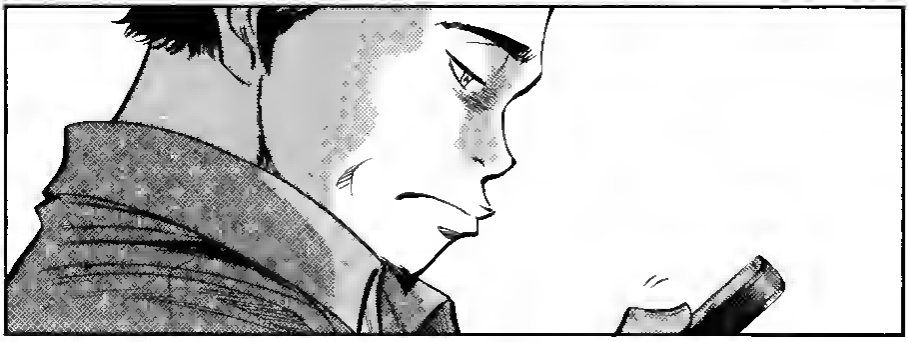
青心寮

YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN BE ABLE TO MOVE YOUR LEGS AFTER ALL THAT HARD RUNNING!!
THEN REST!!


HUH? PITCHING ..
OF COURSE WE WON'T BE DOING IT TODAY


SPEAKING OF WHICH, THERE ARE TOO MANY THINGS TO PONDER FROM TODAY'S GAME ..
AS THE CAPTAIN, I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT ..



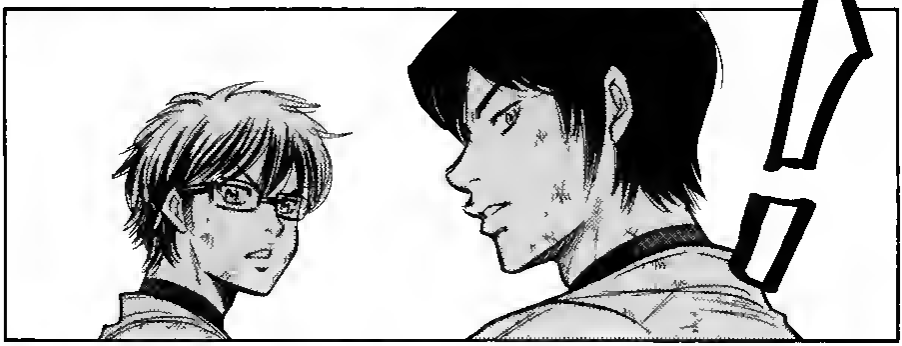


WEREN'T YOU DOING WELL IN THE BULLPEN TODAY?

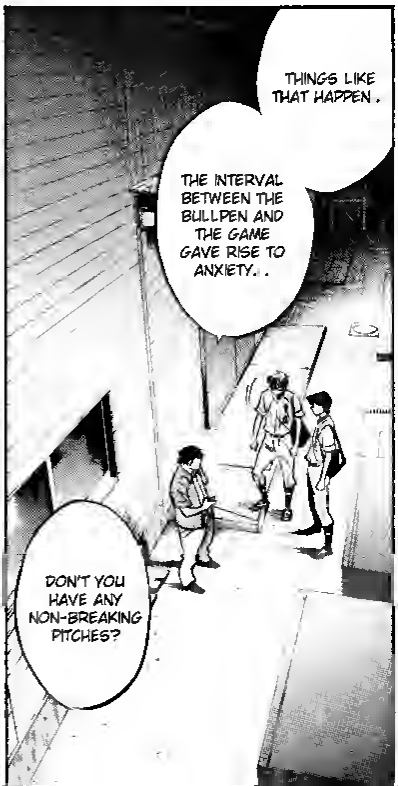
COACH OCHIAI...

ペコッ
WHAT IS HE DOING... HERE...

BUT YOUR CONDITION SUDDENLY GOT WORSE WHEN YOU GOT ON THE MOUND.

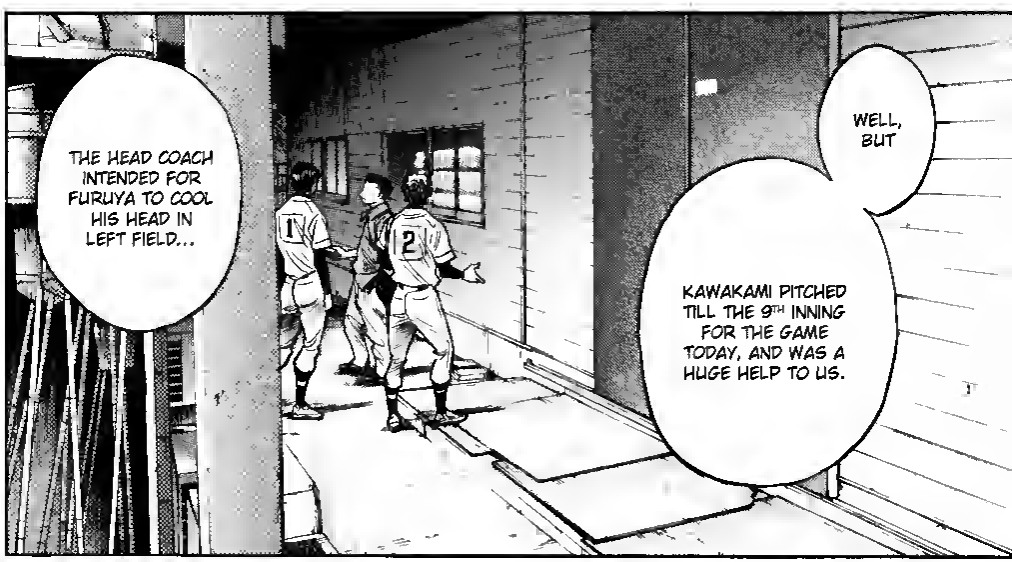


I REALLY WANTED HIM TO RECOVER ON HIS OWN.
AH... YES. HE PITCHES SPLITTERS AND USES PICKOFFS...


THINGS LIKE THAT HAPPEN.
THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE BULLPEN AND THE GAME GAVE RISE TO ANXIETY..
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY NON-BREAKING PITCHES?

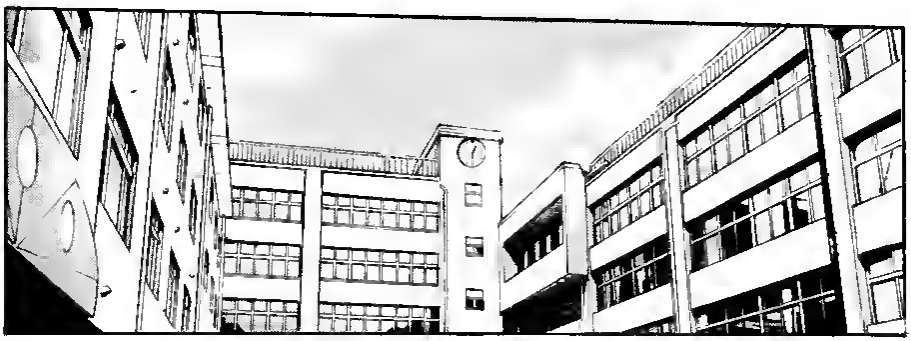
RIGHT?

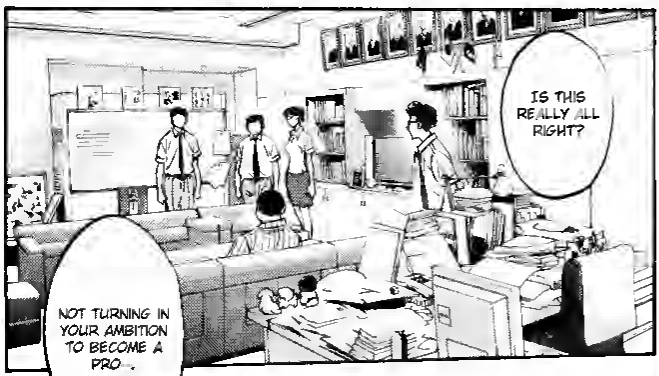
I ALSO THOUGHT HE WAS SUBBED TOO EARLY.
ALL THE MORE IF WE INTEND TO MAKE AN ACE OUT OF FURUYA.
2


THE HEAD COACH INTENDED FOR FURUYA TO COOL HIS HEAD IN LEFT FIELD...
WELL, BUT
KAWAKAMI PITCHED TILL THE 9TH INNING FOR THE GAME TODAY, AND WAS A HUGE HELP TO US.
1
2

I WOULDN'T SUB HIM.
Ignoring me!?

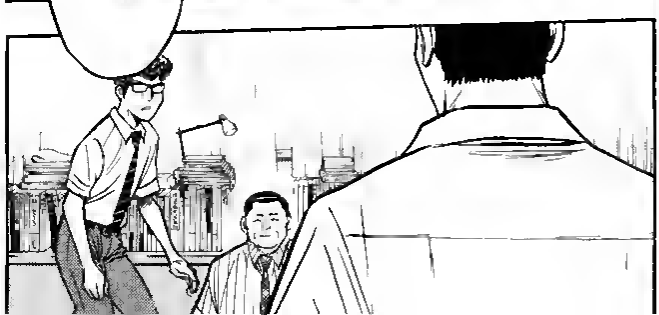
NO MATTER WHAT HAP-PENS,
I WOULDN'T SUB OUT THE ACE—
BEAR WITH IT A LITTLE LONGER..






Principal's Office

Head Official




HUH?

YES!
I AM THINKING OF ENROLLING IN THE HEAD COACH'S OLD UNIVERSITY, M UNIVERSITY.

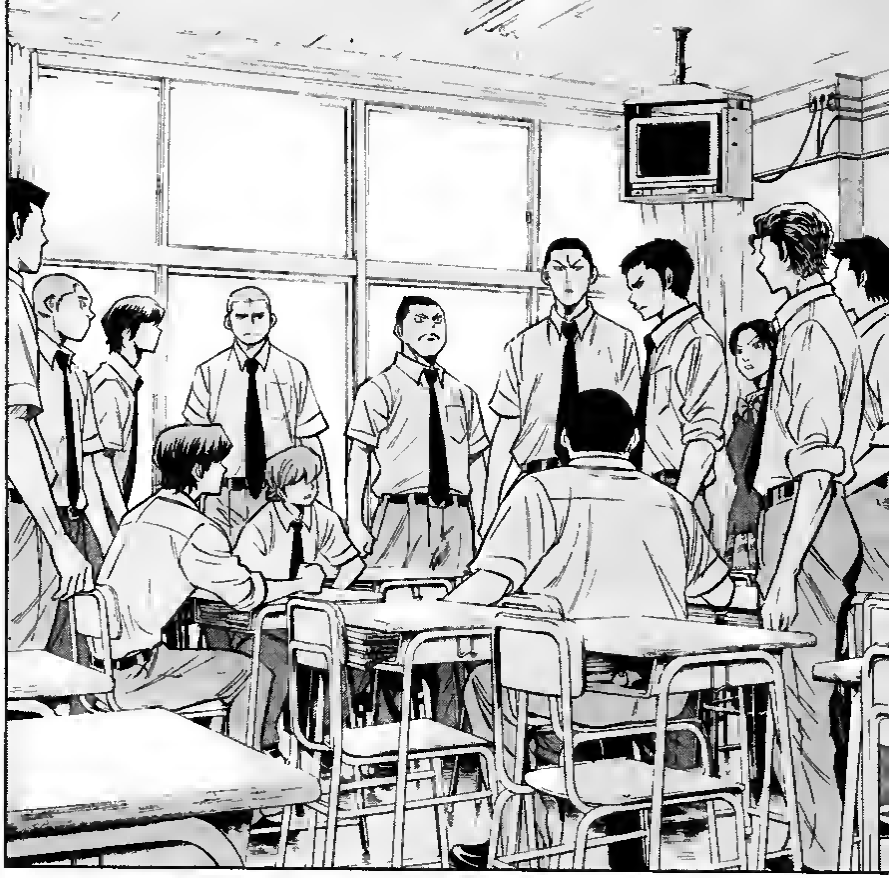
I SEE.
COACH KATAOKA'S OLD SCHOOL...

AFTER ALL IF THE SCHOOL'S NAME IS ON TV IT'S GOOD PUBLICITY.
THIS COULD BE A GREAT CHANCE FOR YOU!!
I AM HONOURED THAT EVERYONE IS WILLING TO HEAR ME OUT, BUT
IT WON'T BE TOO LATE EVEN IF I START HONING MY SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY

WELL... STARTING NEXT YEAR, A NEW SYSTEM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN OUR TEAM.
IT WOULD BE GREAT FOR OUR SCHOOL THAT YOU CAN ACT AS A CONNECTION TO M UNIVERSITY...
P... PRINCIPAL!
ISN'T IT ALL RIGHT? THEY'LL FIND OUT EVENTUALLY!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

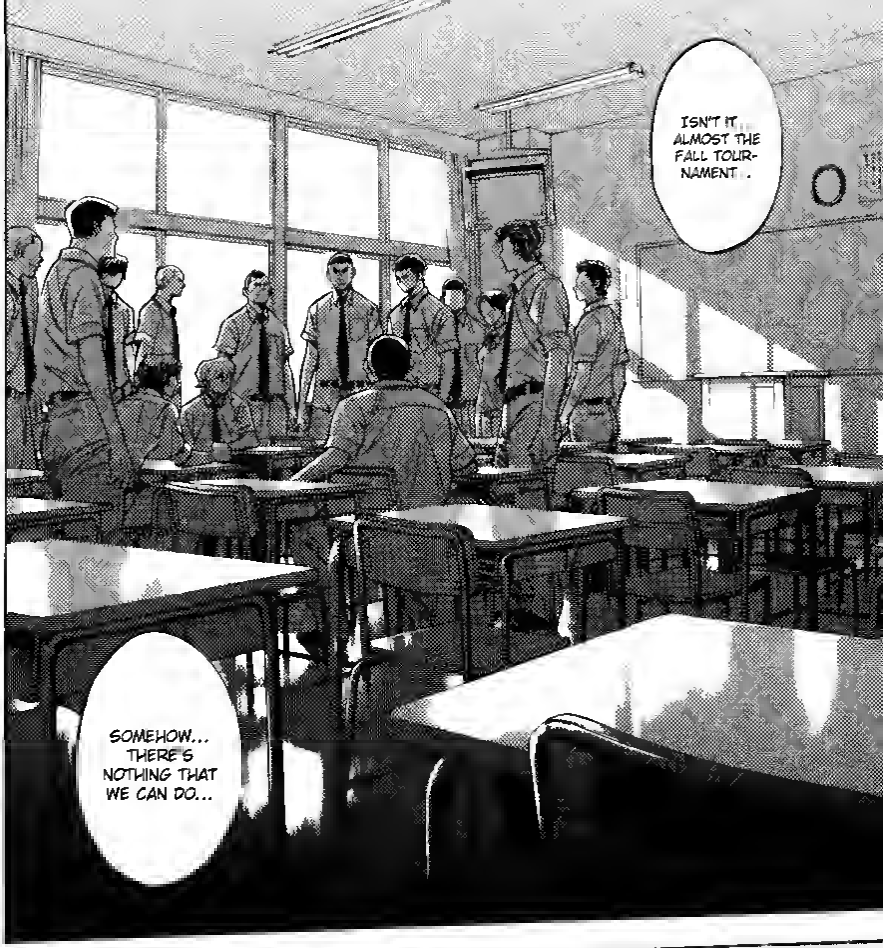
# CHAPTER 227 / COMEBACK



FOR REAL... THE COACH.
.....
SEEMS HE HANDED IN HIS RESIGNATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SUMMER TOURNAMENT ENDED
HE INSISTED ON COACHING TILL THE FALL TOURNAMENT TO AVOID CAUSING TROUBLE TO THE TEAM
MOST LIKELY THEY DON'T...
....
...SO... THAT OCHAI GUY IS THE NEW COACH?
DO THE 1ST AND 2ND YEARS KNOW...

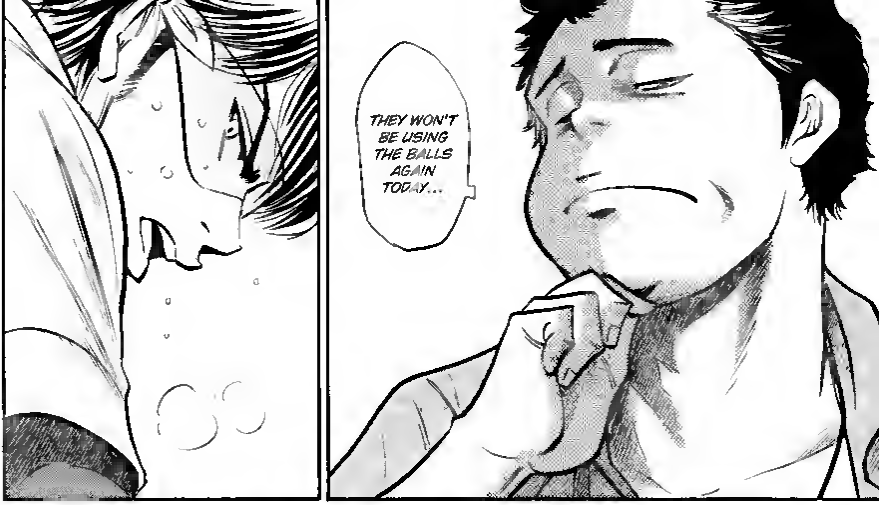
DAMN... IS IT OUR FAULT?
BECAUSE WE DIDN'T GO TO KOSHIEN...
...COACH IS ALSO A QUALIFIED TEACHER IN THIS SCHOOL.
DOES HE INTEND TO RESIGN FROM THE SCHOOL AS WELL...?
...

ISASHIKI...
THE COACH WON'T BE AROUND EVEN IF I COME BACK TO WATCH PRACTICE AFTER GRADUATION!!
I HATE THIS!!
...
DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO MUCH.
YOUR BASEBALL LIFE IS JUST BEGINNING.
CHRIS... WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
OF COURSE I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT YOUR STUDIES...
I WILL BE FOCUSING MY WORKOUTS ON PHYSICAL TRAINING, SET UP BY MY FATHER.


ISN'T IT ALMOST THE FALL TOURNAMENT.
SOMEHOW... THERE'S NOTHING THAT WE CAN DO...

EXCUSE ME
OH, YOU'RE EARLY!
COACH... ABOUT THE TRAINING SCHEDULE TODAY...
...
E... ERM, HE'D COACH...

ONE MORE LAP IF YOUR TIME FALLS BEHIND!
EVERYONE DO IT AGAIN FROM THE TOP!!
THIS IS JUST LIKE OFF-SEASON TRAINING CAMP
haa
A... ARE WE REALLY DOING TIMED RUNS...!?
haa
SWING YOUR ARM!
KEEP YOUR LEGS UP!!
haa
haa


THEY WON'T BE USING THE BALLS AGAIN TODAY...

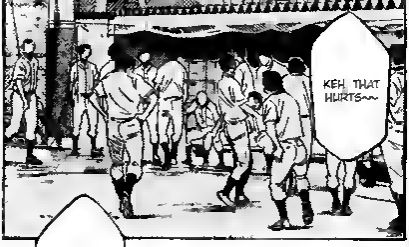
BEAR WITH IT A LITTLE LONGER.
I WOULDN'T SUB OUT THE ACE—
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS,

THE WAY HE SAID IT, AS EXPECTED...
yawn—
SHOULD I GO BACK
I NOTICED IT THE MOMENT SOMEONE WHO WASN'T A CLUB ALUMNUS CAME AS COACH.

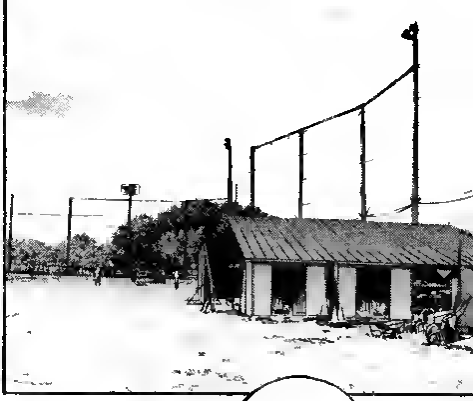
WHY DIDN'T THE HEAD COACH SAY ANYTHING TO US...
DON'T LOOK DOWN!!
haa
haa
HEY!
HOW MANY MORE LAPS TO GO?
haa
THE UNCERTAINTY JUST MAKES US MORE TIRED
HEY!
haa

LIFT YOUR HEADS!
RUN AT FULL STRENGTH FOR THE REMAINING 10 LAPS!!
COULD IT BE... THE COACH HAS GIVEN UP ON US FOR THE FALL TOURNAMENT...?
HWOOOOOH!
YOSHAAA!

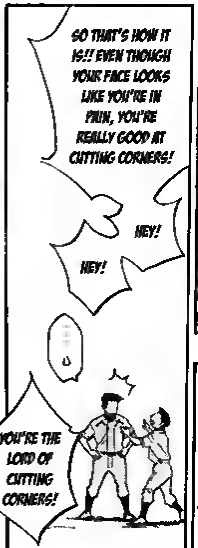
WOOOH!
THE LOWER BODY IS THE FOUNDATION FOR PITCHERS~~~
NO MATTER HOW REGRETTABLE IT IS, THAT DAY WILL NEVER RETURN
UWOO
OO
OOH!
ONLY HIS VOICE IS LOUD...
...
I WILL SHINE THE MOST TOMORROW~~~
NO, THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW AND TWO DAYS AFTER TOMORROW TOO~~~
Shut up!

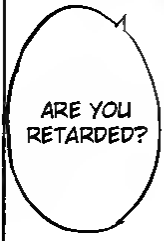

KEH THAT HURTS~~

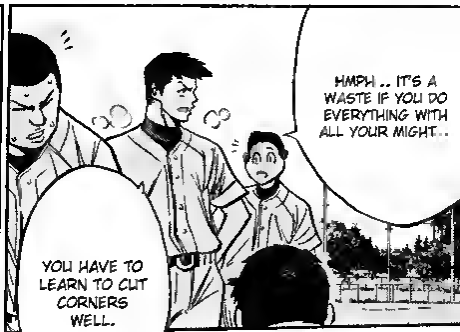
MY CALVES ARE TINGLING!



AS EXPECTED FROM SOMEONE WHO RUNS EVERY DAY...
Dammit~~~ I want to touch a ball!!
HOW CAN SAWAMURA BE SO ENERGETIC ALL THE TIME...
EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW WHEN THE RUNNING WILL END..


SO THAT'S HOW IT IS!! EVEN THOUGH YOUR FACE LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IN PAIN, YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT CUTTING CORNERS!
HEY!
HEY!
YOU'RE THE LORD OF CUTTING CORNERS!

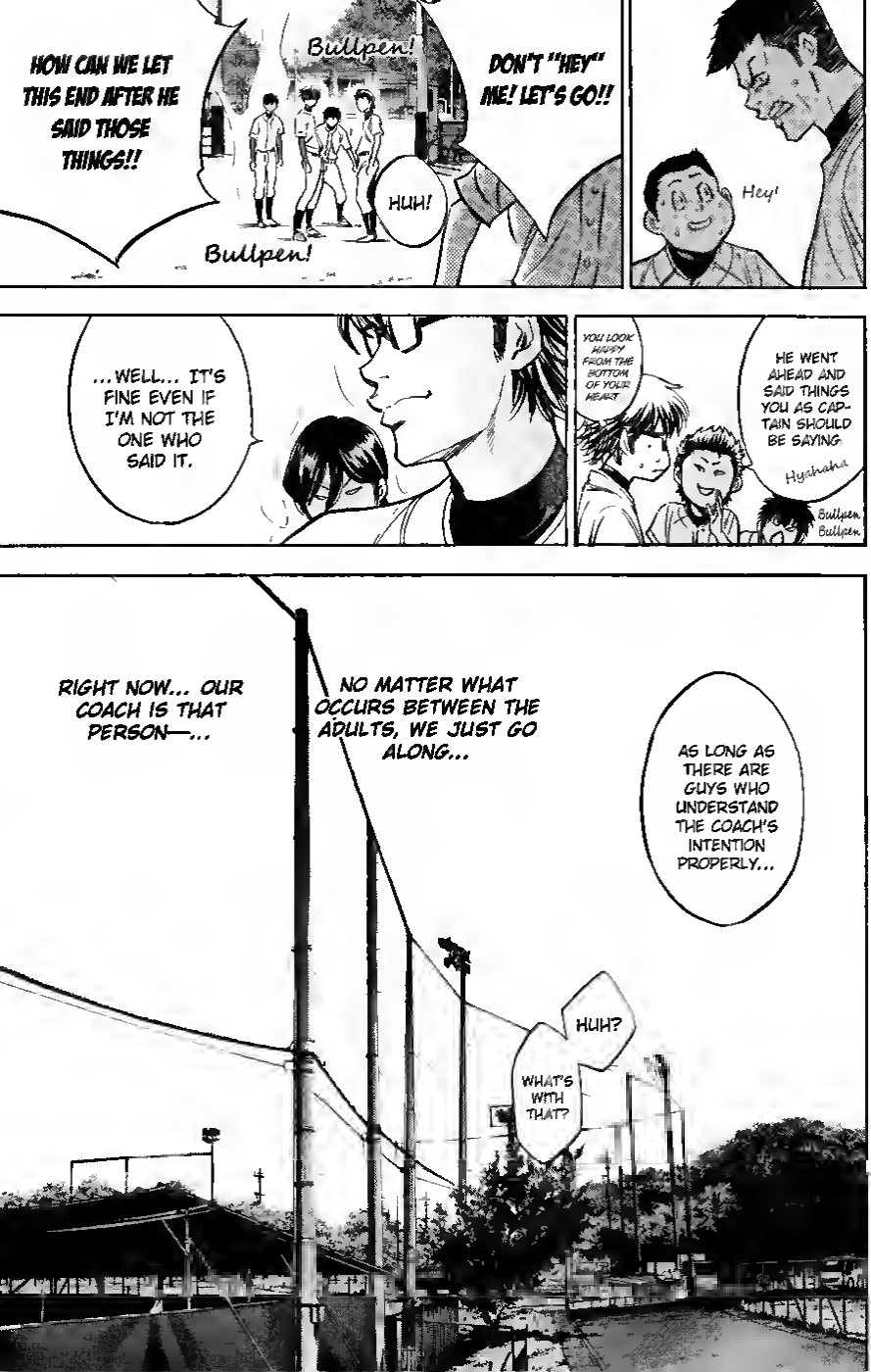

ARE YOU RETARDED?


HMPH.. IT'S A WASTE IF YOU DO EVERYTHING WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT..
YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO CUT CORNERS WELL..

Wowww

FIRST YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU PROPERLY!
DIDN'T THE COACH SAY THAT YESTERDAY!?
B... BUT!
WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TOURNAMENT... RIGHT NOW.
RUNNING RELUCTANTLY JUST BECAUSE THE COACH SAID SO...
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE THINKING WHILE RUNNING, YOU CAN JUST KEEP RUNNING FOREVER
ZONO-SAN...

ALSO, THE COACH NEVER SAID THAT WE COULDN'T TOUCH BALLS DURING SELF-TRAINING!
PRACTICE DOESN'T USUALLY END THIS EARLY!
YEAH.
ISN'T THAT SO, MIYUKI?
EVEN THE BULLPEN!?
KOMINATO, LET'S GO!
RIGHT!
WELL THEN, I'LL BE HITTING FROM THE MACHINES FIRST.
COME ALONG IF YOU GUYS WANT, TOO!


HOW CAN WE LET THIS END AFTER HE SAID THOSE THINGS!!
Bullpen!
DON'T "HEY" ME! LET'S GO!!
HUH!
Bullpen!
Hey!
...WELL... IT'S FINE EVEN IF I'M NOT THE ONE WHO SAID IT.
YOU LOOK HAPPY FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART
HE WENT AHEAD AND SAID THINGS YOU AS CAPTAIN SHOULD BE SAYING
Hyahaha
Bullpen, Bullpen
RIGHT NOW... OUR COACH IS THAT PERSON—...
NO MATTER WHAT OCCURS BETWEEN THE ADULTS, WE JUST GO ALONG...
AS LONG AS THERE ARE GUYS WHO UNDERSTAND THE COACH'S INTENTION PROPERLY...
HUH?
WHAT'S WITH THAT?

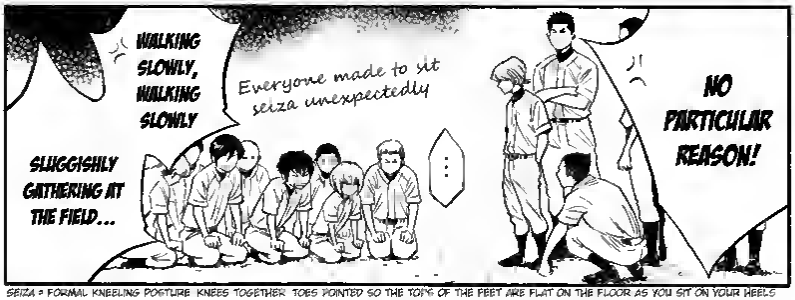
SEPTEMBER 23RD——
YES.
WELL, HELPING OUT WITH PRACTICE IS A GREAT HELP.
HUH? WITH SO MANY PEOPLE...
BUT IF IT CAUSES YOU TO NEGLECT YOUR STUDIES...
WELL, I UNDERSTAND YOUR DESIRE TO PLAY...
YES... BUT EVERYONE WANTS A CHANGE OF PACE.
HAPPY SINCE OE CAME BACK
IT'S AN IMPORTANT PERIOD FOR YOU NOW. IT'S FINE NOT TO PUSH YOURSELVES.
ALSO, THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO COACH ABOUT...

THIS IS THE 3RD DAY...
We're running again today...
ALTHOUGH ZONO-SAN SAID THAT... AS EXPECTED...
ORAA—
THE GAME IS APPROACHING
HEY 1ST YEARS!!
QUIT DRAGGING YOUR FEET!
RUN!!

WE'LL ONLY WAIT FOR 10 SECONDS——!!
YES!

HERE——
COME~~

# CHAPTER 228 / *SENPAI*



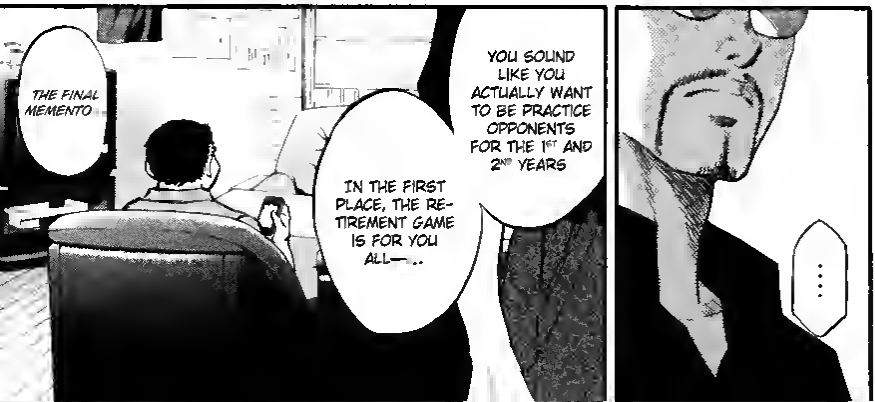

SEIZA = FORMAL KNEELING POSTURE. KNEES TOGETHER, TOES POINTED SO THE TOPS OF THE FEET ARE FLAT ON THE FLOOR AS YOU SIT ON YOUR HEELS. VERY UNCOMFORTABLE UNTIL YOU'VE HAD YEARS TO GET USED TO IT. SERIOUSLY.

ARE YOU LOSING OUT IN SPIRIT?
STARTING TODAY, YOU WILL DO 1,000 SETS OF 1-TO-1 FIELDING!
Eeehhh!?
PREPARE YOURSELVES!!
HUH?
A RETIREMENT GAME FOR THE 3RD YEARS?

YES...
I WOULD LIKE THE GAME TO BE HELD A LITTLE SOONER...
A... LITTLE SOONER... WHEN?
IN PAST CASES, IT WAS HELD AFTER THE FALL TOURNAMENT ENDED, AROUND THE END OF OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER
THE 3RD YEARS ARE BUSY WITH THEIR FUTURE CAREERS!
YOU JUST NEED TO WAIT 1 MONTH FOR THE GAME...
WHY DO YOU WANT IT EARLY?
STATE YOUR REASON

THERE ARE THINGS WE WANT TO CONVEY TO OUR KOHAI.
HUH?

THE THINGS THE COACH TAUGHT US,
THE THINGS THAT FEEL DIFFERENT AFTER RETIRING.
INCLUDING TECHNIQUES, WE WANT THEM TO GAIN SOME UNDERSTANDING THROUGH THIS GAME, HOWEVER LITTLE IT MAY BE...


YOU SOUND LIKE YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO BE PRACTICE OPPONENTS FOR THE 1ST AND 2ND YEARS
IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE RETIREMENT GAME IS FOR YOU ALL—..
THE FINAL MEMENTO
...

BEING THEIR OPPONENT IS ENOUGH!
RIGHT NOW... THIS IS THE ONLY THING WE CAN DO.

T... THINGS YOU ARE ABLE TO DO... YOU GUYS...
...YUUKI...
...HE MUST HAVE HEARD ABOUT IT FROM SOMEWHERE...
ABOUT THE NEW COACH...
THIS IS THE WISH OF ALL THE 3RD YEAR MEMBERS...
So nostalgic...
Move it! Briskly! Oraa!

RUN
LIKE DOGS!
THE ANSWER WE CAME UP WITH OURSELVES.

IT'S ALL RIGHT EVEN IF IT ISN'T A FINAL MEMENTO.
AS LONG AS IT'S EVEN A LITTLE HELP FOR THE TEAM...

……
THE GROUPING FOR THE MAIN TOURNAMENT WILL BE FINALIZED AT THE START OF NEXT WEEK.
FINALS GROUPING FOR TOURNAMENT
2ND ROUND
SO TROUBLE-SOME— PLAYERS STARTING TO ASSERT THEM-SELVES .

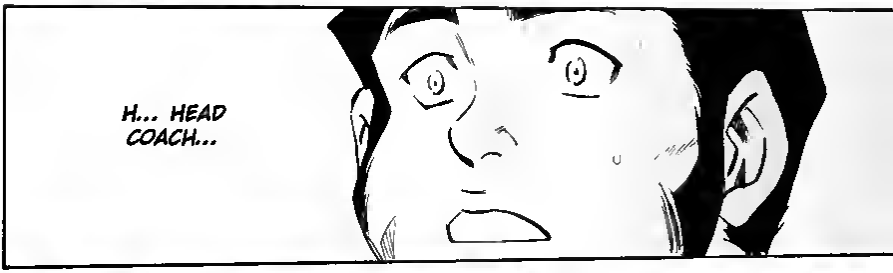
IF YOU WANT TO DO IT, THEN THIS WEEKEND...
!
whewww

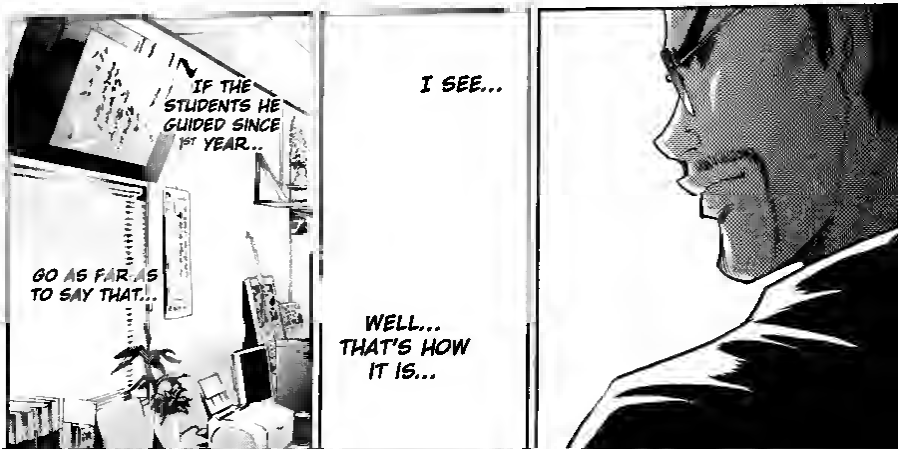
CAN YOU GET YOUR FEEL BACK IN 2 DAYS?
ABSOLUTELY! SOME AMONG US STILL KEEP OURSELVES ACTIVE!!

SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT YOU WILL FIGHT IT OUT WITH THE 1ST AND 2ND YEARS.

YES!
PLEASE LEND ME YOUR GUIDANCE!!
IS THIS ALL RIGHT?
...
THEN I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE!
I'LL TELL THE OTHERS TOO.
YUUKI...

THE ANSWER THEY CAME UP WITH THEMSELVES...
THE 3RD YEARS WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY THEY'RE ASKING A FAVOUR OF ME
I CAN'T REFUSE THEM...


H... HEAD COACH...


IF THE STUDENTS HE GUIDED SINCE 1ST YEAR...
GO AS FAR AS TO SAY THAT...
I SEE...
WELL... THAT'S HOW IT IS...

AND... THAT IS MOST LIKELY... FOR THE SAKE OF THE HEAD COACH—...
RIGHT NOW... THIS IS THE ONLY THING WE CAN DO.
...
ALMOST NO ONE SHOWED UP AFTER THEY RETIRED...
IN THE TEAM I WAS ON
HE'S WELL-LIKED...
I'M SO ENVIOUS.

SEPTEMBER 26TH—
#17
#11
#17
YOU'LL BE IN CHARGE OF COACHING THE TEAM!
I'LL BE THE UMPIRE FOR TODAY
HUH?
#17
HUH? WHAT IS IT TODAY?
WHO KNOWS
AN INTRA-SQUAD GAME?
#11

DON'T OVER-THINK.
IT'S FINE AS LONG AS YOU DO WHAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF!
青道
ARE YOU SERIOUS, COACH...
THEY'RE ALL WEARING THEIR COMPETITION UNIFORMS
A GAME WITH THE OB RIGHT NOW!?
EVEN THOUGH THE DRAW FOR THE ACTUAL GAME IS TOMORROW—

TOKYO
TOKYO
TOKYO

DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION, WE'LL USE SAC' BUNTS OR SQUEEZE PLAYS.
JUST KEEP THAT IN MIND.
COACH FOR 3RD YEARS TEAM
TAKIGAWA CHRIS YUU
BUT... THIS MUST BE A FAVOUR THE SENPAI ASKED OF THE COACH...
SO THEY'RE NOT JUST HERE TO GRILL US.
SO THE SENPAI SHOWING UP AT OUR PRACTICE FOR CONSECUTIVE DAYS WAS FOR THIS DAY...
OI, YOU HAD BETTER BE SERIOUS ABOUT IT!
WE WON'T GO EASY JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A TOURNAMENT!!
HOW UNDEPENDABLE DO THEY THINK...
WE ARE...

WE WILL PLAY WITH ALL OUR MIGHT!
I'LL KICK YOUR ASSES RIGHT AWAY IF YOU SLACK!
JUN-SAN...
JU...
ドッ
ドッ
ドッ

...PLAY...?
AGAINST THESE GUYS?
I WILL DEFINITELY PLAY IN THIS GAME.
TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 27

# "IN ORDER TO BECOME A PRO"

THOSE ARE THE MOST MEMORABLE WORDS IN MY CONVERSATION WITH PLAYER MAEDA.

THE REASON HE CHOSE TO ENROLL IN THE PRESTIGIOUS PL ACADEMY, KNOWN FOR ITS RIGOROUS TRAINING, WAS "IN ORDER TO BECOME A PRO".

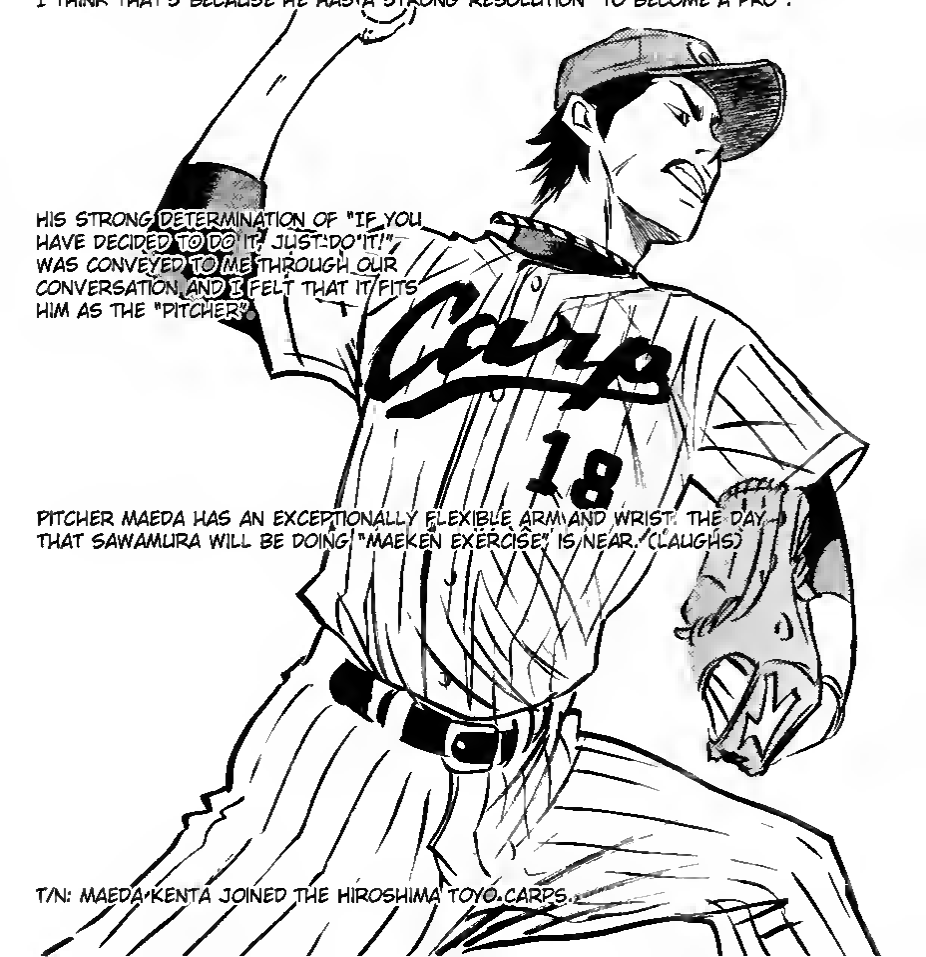
IN FACT, THE TRAINING IS RIGOROUS AND THE LEVEL IS RATHER HIGH.

DURING HIGH SCHOOL, THE ONLY TIME HE ENJOYED WAS DURING "LESSONS"... (LAUGHS) (AFTER HE WENT PRO AND JOINED THE CARPS, INFAMOUS FOR THEIR RIGOROUS PRACTICE REGIMEN, HE ADJUSTED EASILY.)

EVEN SO, HE GRASPED EVERY CHANCE AND BECAME A STARTER HIS 1ST YEAR.

HE WAS ABLE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE SUMMER KOSHIEN AND MADE IT ALL THE WAY TO THE SEMIFINALS OF SPRING KOSHIEN IN HIS 3RD YEAR.

I THINK THAT'S BECAUSE HE HAS A STRONG RESOLUTION "TO BECOME A PRO".




HIS STRONG DETERMINATION OF "IF YOU HAVE DECIDED TO DO IT, JUST DO IT!" WAS CONVEYED TO ME THROUGH OUR CONVERSATION AND I FELT THAT IT FITS HIM AS THE "PITCHER".

PITCHER MAEDA HAS AN EXCEPTIONALLY FLEXIBLE ARM AND WRIST. THE DAY THAT SAWAMURA WILL BE DOING "MAEKEN EXERCISE" IS NEAR. (LAUGHS)

T/N: MAEDA KENTA JOINED THE HIROSHIMA TOYO CARPS.

STAFF

栗栖正義

林本勇気

長瀬宙夢

浦谷篤志

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清水貴司

齋藤優作

EDITOR

KIICHIRO SUGAWARA

TETSUYA FUJIKAWA

当時、野球漫画が3つも連載してる中、「橋の下のバットマン」で
勝負するチャンスをいただけたこと、本当に感謝しています。
結果につながらず、期待には応えられなかったですが……。
前マガジン編集長、江富保氏のご冥福をお祈りいたします。

そして東日本大震災で被災された方々、
心よりお見舞い申し上げます。
すぐに届くかはわかりませんが、僕は描き続けてます。
再び手にとっていただいた時、
少しでも楽しんでもらえるように!!

寺嶋裕二

AND TO MEET THE EXPECTATIONS
VS. CURRENT MEMBERS.
3RD YEARS
THE THOUGHTS
OF THOSE THOUGHTS—.
THEY WANT TO CONVEY—.
Hmph—
VOLUME 27 PREVIEW
Ace of Diamond